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FROM LENIN TO GORBACHEV:
Changing Soviet Perspectives on East-West Relations

By Paul Marantz

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By Paul Marantz

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Mikhail Gorbachev has made the call for "new thinking" the central theme in his prounouncements on international politics. But what is the significance of this development? Are we witnessing the begining of a historic reappraisal of the central tenets of Marxism-Leninism or just a skillful public relations campaign? Since we cannot evaluate the "new thinking" without a sound understanding of the old, this study attempts to answer these questions through an analysis of the development of Marxist-Leninist doctrine pertaining to East-West relations as it has evolved from Lenin's day to the present.

The major conclusions of this study, some of which challenge widely held views, are as follows: (1) Lenin, who was primarily a political activist rather than a theorist, did not bequeath his successors a well-developed theory of East-West relations. His perspectives on international relations embodied contradictory elements, since at one and the same time he sought to promote world revolution and to consolidate the revolution in Russia through expanded trade and improved diplomatic relations with the capitalist world. Lenin's contradictory views are consistent with a wide range of policies.

(2) Stalin, who borrowed very selectively from Lenin's ambiguous legacy, was the true father of the harsh, black-and-white view of the world that became so prominent in the 1930s and 1940s. Stalin was acutely suspicious, insecure, fearful, and deeply pessimistic. He believed that there was no basis for prolonged co-operation between communist and capitalist states. This bleak pessimism pervaded all his policies.

(3) Khrushchev ushered in an ideological revolution of unprecedented proportions. The key elements of the Stalinist worldview were discarded, and a new perspective was embraced which was far more hopeful and self-confident. For the first time, the doctrinal foundations for a policy of long-term East-West co-operation were created. However, Khrushchev's intense optimism also had its negative side. His belief that history was on the side of communism led to a restless probing of the West's weak spots. The ensuing crises prevented a durable improvement in Moscow's relations with the outside world.

(4) Brezhnev promoted the detente of the early 1970s, the most significant thawing of East-West relations to date. Yet this detente was ultimately doomed to collapse because of his failure to build upon the ideological innovations introduced by Khrushchev and his conviction, which was rooted in an unquestioned adherence to traditional perspectives, that the Soviet Union should endeavour to tip the "correlation of forces" in its favor through an extensive military buildup.

(5) Although the Gorbachev era is just beginning and its final contours have not yet solidified, there is a sound basis for cautious optimism about the nature and direction of his "new thinking." Gorbachev's initial reformulations of Soviet ideology have been limited and circumspect, but they suggest that traditional Soviet assumptions about international security, the nature of war, and the opportunities for international co-operation may all be undergoing a searching re-examination within the Kremlin. Already, this process has had a tangible impact on the day-to-day conduct of Soviet foreign policy (e.g., by promoting the successful conclusion of a treaty eliminating intermediate-range nuclear missiles, by facilitating Soviet acceptance of intrusive on-site verification of arms control, and by encouraging the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan). If present trends continue, Gorbachev may yet preside over a doctrinal revolution even more far-reaching than Khrushchev's, one that could set the stage for a truly historic transformation of East-West relations in the years ahead.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to enhance our understanding of how the Soviet leadership has perceived and conceptualized East-West relations.[1] It examines the key elements in the official Soviet view of the capitalist world and discusses the extent to which these were, or were not, modified at different points in the history of the Soviet regime in the period from 1917 to the present. This study is based upon the premise that we cannot deal effectively with the Soviet Union unless we have a clear understanding of how its leaders perceive the outside world. Whether our objective is to improve the prospects for greater East-West co-operation or simply to contain Soviet expansionism more effectively, we must know how the world looks from Moscow.

This is especially important at the present time. Mikhail Gorbachev, who became General Secretary in March 1985, has made the call for "new thinking" about international politics one of the central planks in his political platform. He has decried traditional ways of thinking as being dangerously inappropriate for the complex realities of the nuclear age. Gorbachev's statements have kindled a sharp debate among Western analysts. Some argue that a genuine process of ferment and change is underway in the Soviet Union.

[1] The author would like to thank Professors Robert O. Freedman and S. Neil MacFarlane for their critical comments on portions of the manuscript, the Canadian Institute for International Peace and Security for helping fund research for this paper, and the Donner Canadian Foundation for the financial support provided through its grant to the research project on International Regimes of the Institute of International Relations of the University of British Columbia.

Others contend that Gorbachev's pronouncements represent nothing more than the latest in a long line of Soviet public relations campaigns, and that once again the Soviet leadership is attempting to promote an image of moderation and flexibility even though core Soviet perceptions and long-standing Soviet goals have not really been modified. Thus, we need to have an understanding of the nature and development of Soviet thinking about East-West relations in order to have a sound basis for evaluating Gorbachev's initiatives.

We in the West have often found it difficult to understand Soviet perspectives on international politics. A major reason for this is the pervasive secrecy that surrounds the formulation of Soviet foreign policy, something that Gorbachev's call for *glasnost'* (greater publicity or openness) has not yet changed. Most of the direct evidence and source material that we take for granted in the study of the foreign policy of other countries is almost totally unavailable for the Soviet Union. Soviet archives remain unopened, leading officials generally do not write memoirs, press conferences are rare, there is no opposition party to demand an accounting, disgruntled officials do not leak confidential documents, nor does the press reveal how decisions are arrived at. All Soviet statements pertaining to foreign affairs, whether made by political leaders, designated spokesmen or scholars, are carefully controlled and coordinated.

Yet, paradoxically, this situation can also be of some assistance in the study of Soviet politics. The Soviet regime adheres to a rigorously codified ideology, and there is thus a body of official doctrine which authoritatively defines the Party's perspectives on international politics. By studying this doctrine, we can gain a valuable insight into the perceptions of the Soviet leadership. Even though there is not an exact one-to-one correspondence between the actual private views of the leadership and the overt public doctrine, a study of the official doctrine and the degree to which it does or does not change at particular points in time can serve as an important indicator of parallel shifts in elite perspectives. In the words of one scholar: "To outside observers, doctrine . . . can act as a weather vane; once officials have decided upon policy they publicly justify it with

appropriate doctrine, and the doctrinal changes indicate the policy changes."[2]

The approach which this study takes is to examine the evolution of Soviet foreign policy doctrine as a means of gaining a better understanding of how Soviet leaders have approached East-West relations. It is divided into five chapters, each dealing with the foreign policy doctrine and perspectives of one of the major Soviet leaders, Lenin, Stalin, Khrushchev, Brezhnev, and Gorbachev. This approach has been adopted in order to provide a better understanding of what Soviet doctrine is and — equally important — what it is not. All too often, Western analysts have proceeded on the basis of assumptions which are either false or which constitute a perilous oversimplification of a far more complex reality.

In examining the impact of individual Soviet leaders on the development of Soviet doctrine, it will be argued: (1) Lenin did not bequeath to his successors a carefully developed doctrinal framework for viewing East-West relations. (2) The dichotomic, class-based view of the world crystallized under Stalin during the 1920s and 1930s. Thereafter, Stalin refused to alter it, despite the vast changes in the Soviet Union's international position resulting from World War II, the emergence of Communist regimes in Eastern Europe and China, and the development of atomic weapons. (3) A doctrinal revolution of unprecedented proportions occurred under Khrushchev's leadership in the years 1956-1960. (4) Brezhnev, in sharp contrast to his predecessor, did little to advance the process of doctrinal change, and Soviet perspectives on East-West relations were largely frozen for the two decades from 1964 to 1984. (5) Since Gorbachev has been General Secretary for less than three years, a final verdict cannot presently be reached as to the true meaning and long-term significance of his call for "new thinking" about international politics. However, a careful examination of what he has said thus far suggests that the "new thinking" involves far more than a

[2] Walter LaFeber, *America, Russia, and the Cold War, 1945-1984*, New York: Knopf, 1985, 5th ed., p. 18.

cynical hoax designed to beguile and ensnare the West, even though it does not, as yet, constitute a major revamping of ideological perspectives comparable to the far-reaching changes that Khrushchev pioneered in the 1950s. Even should he wish to escape the constraints imposed by the official ideology, Gorbachev cannot easily or quickly do so. For this reason, we cannot understand and evaluate the significance of the "new thinking" without a clear conception of the old.

LENIN'S AMBIGUOUS LEGACY

This chapter deals with the following questions: What ideological legacy did Lenin leave his successors? To what extent have subsequent Soviet perspectives on East-West relations been a direct product of the concepts and doctrines advanced by Lenin? Is there a Leninist blueprint for world revolution? In attempting to answer these questions, it is argued that the conventional wisdom so often voiced in the Soviet Union and the West is incorrect. Lenin did not have a consistent and well-developed theory of East-West relations; he never elaborated a clear set of principles and concepts analyzing the nature of relations between proletarian Russia and the capitalist world, and his views varied quite considerably over the years, as he responded to changing political circumstances.

Lenin approached East-West relations with the temperament of a shrewd and flexible politician rather than as a rigorous theoretician. His voluminous speeches and writings often refer to international developments. But his pronouncements took the form of concrete political advocacy rather than careful theoretical analysis. For this reason, he left posterity a highly diffuse and ambiguous legacy. Moreover, the ambiguity of his pronouncements has left them open to politically inspired misuse. Soviet spokesmen wrap themselves in the mantle of Lenin and claim to be guided by "Leninist theory" no matter how far their policies and perspectives might stray from his. Conversely, hard-line critics of the Soviet Union in the West often cite Lenin's most militant pronouncements out of context, ignore other statements of his that are inconvenient to their arguments, and

construct an image of "the Leninist blueprint for world conquest" which may be useful for partisan political purposes, but stands in the way of a sound understanding of how Lenin actually approached East-West relations and the ways in which the early practice of Soviet diplomacy has influenced the subsequent course of Soviet foreign policy.

Lenin cannot be correctly understood as long as he is viewed as a theoretician who had a well-developed theory of international politics. In fact, Lenin not only lacked a coherent theory of international relations, but was not even a theorist in the strict sense of the term. The search by scholars — Soviet or Western — for such non-existent entities as Lenin's "theory of peaceful coexistence" or his "theory of socialism in one country" is both misplaced and misleading. It imparts a false consistency and coherence to his views, and it ignores the contradictory nature and complexity of his thinking as it evolved over the years.

First and foremost, Lenin was a pragmatic man of action. The central question in his mind was always *chto delat'*? — what is to be done? His primary concern was the proper course of action in the here and now. Once this was decided, he would mobilize his formidable polemical skills to exhort his followers. The appropriate citations from Marx and Engels would be adduced to support his actions, and the advocates of differing tactics would be attacked as traitors to true Marxism. But Lenin's use of theory was clearly tactical and polemical. He would twist the works of Marx and Engels to justify unorthodox, un-Marxist policies, and he was adept at providing theoretical arguments one day for the very policies that he had rejected with equal vigor the day before.[3]

Lenin was not just pragmatic and untheoretical in his approach to politics; he was anti-theoretical as well. He not only neglected theory,

[3] The interaction of theory and practice in Lenin's approach to politics is discussed in: Alfred G. Meyer, *Leninism*, New York: Praeger, 1962; Adam B. Ulam, *The Bolsheviks*, New York: Collier Books, 1968.

but mistrusted it. Stubborn facts were seen as the substance of politics, and he feared that a concern for theoretical consistency was more likely to lead to impractical policies and wishful thinking than to a fuller appreciation of political relationships.

For the true theorist, theory elucidates reality. It allows a person to cut through the confusion of inconsequential detail and to isolate crucial variables and relationships. It makes sense out of overwhelming chaos. For Lenin, the reverse was true. He saw theory as a Procrustean bed of narrow formulas which truncated reality. Theory was always an abstraction which simplified and distorted events:

> [A] Marxist must take cognizance of real life, of the true facts of *reality*, and not cling to a theory of yesterday, which, like all theories, at best only outlines the main and the general, only *comes near* to embracing life in all its complexity.[4]

Lenin described theoreticians as:

> . . . wretched men in mufflers who have kept away from life all the time, who have been sleeping with an old, shabby little book carefully stowed away under the pillow, the unwanted book that serves them as a guide and manual in implanting official socialism. But the minds of tens of millions of those who are doing things create something infinitely loftier than the greatest genius can foresee.[5]

In his view, even the theoretical vision of the Communist Party was bound to be limited:

> History as a whole, and the history of revolutions in particular, is always richer in content, more varied, more multiform, more lively and "ingenious" than is imagined by even the best parties, the most class-conscious vanguards of the most advanced classes.[6]

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[4] V. I. Lenin, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, Moscow: Gospolitizdat, 1958-1966, XXXI, p. 134 (emphasis in the original). Hereafter cited as *"Sochineniia."*

[5] *Ibid.*, XXXV, p. 281.

[6] *Ibid.*, XLI, p. 80.

Lenin's impatience with theory has two direct implications for this study. First, it means that it is impossible to speak of Lenin's theory of East-West relations. Lenin never took the time and effort to systematize his views on international relations, and he cannot be said to have a theory of Soviet foreign policy. Instead, we must be content with a lower level of generality and regard it as an important step forward if we can discern recurring patterns in his general attitudes, inclinations, or views on different problems in international politics.

In studying Lenin's writings and speeches, we must not impart to them a consistency and clarity which, in fact, is not actually present. In many cases, he simply did not think through a particular problem. Often his views were stated vaguely and imprecisely. Furthermore, because he was, above all else, a practical politician, his views were frequently issue-specific and lacking in theoretical consistency. Even though his strongly held opinions of one period often directly contradicted those of an earlier time, he rarely attempted to reconcile these contradictions.

A second consequence of the fact that Lenin's works were political tracts occasioned by immediate concerns, and not carefully elaborated theoretical treatises, is that one must be extremely careful not to take his statements out of context. One would be justifiably reluctant to elaborate upon, for example, Henry Kissinger's or Pierre Trudeau's theory of international politics on the basis of isolated statements made during the heat of a political controversy; yet, this is what is often done with Lenin.

In dissecting his works, we are analyzing political pronouncements and not theoretical treatises, and we must not apply analytical techniques that are suitable for the latter but totally inappropriate for the former. Lenin was invariably convinced that unless his policy was followed, the Party would suffer an irreparable disaster, and for this reason, he was much more concerned to win the debate than to set out his views with consistency or full accuracy. What passes under the grandiose title of "Leninist theory" is often little more than a compilation of his various refutations and counter-arguments. Thus,

while it is possible to put together a string of quotations to "prove" that Lenin believed in the inevitability of war between the two systems or in the impossibility of building socialism in one country, it is equally possible to find another set of citations to "prove" the opposite.

It must be remembered that Lenin did not pen a single theoretical work analyzing the foreign policy of a socialist state and describing the principles that should govern its relations with capitalist nations. During his entire political career, Lenin wrote only one major work dealing with international politics, *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism*. However, this work was published in early 1917, prior to the Bolshevik Revolution, and it dealt only with the economic forces shaping relations among capitalist states. It had absolutely nothing to say about the policies that a socialist state might follow in attempting to coexist with capitalist states. Thus, we find that Lenin developed a theory of capitalism which postulated inevitable war among capitalist states due to the unequal development of capitalism and the resulting conflicts over the redivision of the colonial world, but he did not develop any comparable theory concerning the inevitability of war between capitalist and socialist states.[7]

Lenin did make a number of ad hoc statements on the subject of war between capitalist states and socialist Russia, and these have often been cited in the West. Perhaps the most frequently quoted of all of Lenin's statements is his remark that:

> We are living not merely in a state, but *in a system of states*, and it is inconceivable for the Soviet Republic to exist alongside of the imperialist states for any length of time. One or the other must triumph in the end. And before that end comes, a series of frightful collisions between the Soviet Republic and the bourgeois states is inevitable.[8]

[7] Frederic S. Burin, "The Communist Doctrine of the Inevitability of War," *The American Political Science Review*, LVII, No. 2, 1963, pp. 334-354.

[8] Lenin, *Sochineniia*, XXXVIII, p. 139, (emphasis in the original).

However, this remark, like many of Lenin's other apocalyptic statements suggesting that capitalism and socialism could not exist alongside each other, was made in 1919. At that time, the Russian Civil War and foreign intervention were raging, and Bolshevik power hung by a thread. Lenin simply believed that the vastly more powerful capitalist states, which had already sent their armed forces into Russia, would succeed in crushing the Bolsheviks unless a socialist revolution broke out in Western Europe and saved the Russian Revolution. Lenin was making a political judgment about concrete events and not engaging in abstract theoretical analysis.

By late 1920, conditions had changed, and consequently so did Lenin's views. The foreign intervention had largely ended, the Western economic blockade had been terminated, and there were signs that Russia would soon be able to establish diplomatic relations with the countries of Western Europe. Lenin hailed these developments as marking the beginning of a fundamentally new phase in international politics, one which would enable socialist Russia to enter into comparatively peaceful relations with capitalist nations and to exist alongside them for a significant period of time. In a major speech delivered on 21 November 1920, Lenin repeatedly stressed this theme:

> Without having gained an international victory, which we consider the only sure victory, we are in a position of having won conditions enabling us to exist side by side with capitalist powers, who are now compelled to enter into trade relations with us. In the course of this struggle we have won the right to an independent existence. . . . [I]t will be clear that we have something more than a breathing-space: we have entered a new period, in which we have won the right to our fundamental international existence in the network of capitalist states. . . . Today we can speak, not merely of a breathing-space, but of a real chance of a new and lengthy period of development. Until now we have actually had no basis in the international sense.[9]

[9] *Ibid.*, XLII, pp. 22-23.

Lenin was frank in admitting that the situation that had developed by the end of 1920 was not at all what he had anticipated in 1918 and 1919:

> It is very strange for those of us who have lived through the revolution from its inception, who have experienced and observed our incredible difficulties in breaching the imperialist fronts, to see how things have now developed. At that time probably none of us expected or could have expected that the situation would turn out as it did.[10]

Similarly, in a speech on December 23, 1921, Lenin remarked:

> But is the existence of a socialist republic within capitalist encirclement at all conceivable? It seemed inconceivable from the political and military aspects. That it is possible both politically and militarily has now been proved; it is a fact.[11]

Here, then, was an unexpected situation crying out for systematic analysis and explication. Yet Lenin's speeches simply called attention to this situation with a few glancing remarks and then quickly passed on to more pressing matters. In defiance of all earlier expectations, a socialist government was peacefully existing side by side with capitalist governments, yet Lenin never worked out even the rudiments of a theory of coexistence, despite the politically-inspired claims that Soviet spokesmen were to make in later years.

Lenin's published speeches and writings comprise more than fifty thick volumes, but the total space devoted to peaceful coexistence constitutes less than a page of scattered and generally trivial remarks. In fact, it appears that during his entire political career, Lenin publicly employed the terms "coexistence" or "peaceful coexistence" on only five occasions.[12] Were it not for the Soviet regime's anxious search for ideological legitimacy, these brief remarks would long since have been forgotten.

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[10] *Ibid.*, XLIV, pp. 291-292.

[11] *Ibid.*, p. 301.

[12] *Ibid.*, XL, p. 145; XLI, p. 133; XLIII, p. 199; XLV, pp. 239, 241; *The Christian Science Monitor*, 17 December 1919, p. 1.

One reason for Lenin's failure to clarify and systematize his views on such questions as the inevitability of war and the peaceful coexistence of capitalist and socialist states was his ill health. A stroke in May 1922 sharply curtailed Lenin's political activity, and after a relapse in March 1923, he ceased all writing. This meant that Lenin had only a relatively short period of time to come to terms with the complicated and perplexing international situation which had materialized so unexpectedly by late 1920. Yet, from another perspective, it can also be said that the year and a half which elapsed between Lenin's declaration of a new stage in international politics and his initial stroke in May 1922 provided ample opportunity for at least an attempt at a systematic treatment of this problem. But Lenin was preoccupied with more immediate practical tasks, and once again he manifested his disinterest in fundamental theoretical problems.

It is difficult to acquire a balanced and comprehensive understanding of Lenin's approach to international politics. Soviet spokesmen, especially in their statements directed toward Western audiences, err by exaggerating Lenin's interest in peaceful relations with the capitalist world and by minimizing his commitment to international revolution.[13] On the other hand, many Western analysts exaggerate the priority accorded international revolution in Lenin's thinking, overlook his willingness to make compromises and to establish economic and political ties with capitalist governments, and fail to differentiate sufficiently between Lenin's approach to East-West relations and that of more militant elements within the Bolshevik Party.[14]

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[13] A. Chubar'ian, *Mirnoe sosushchestvovanie: teoriia i praktika*, Moscow: Politizdat, 1976; A. Narochnitskii, *Leninskie traditsii vneshnei politiki Sovetskogo Soiuza*, Moscow: Mezhdunarodnye Otnosheniia, 1977; D. Tomashevsky, "Lenin's Concept of Peaceful Coexistence and the Imperialist Challenge," *International Affairs*, 1982, No. 5, pp. 3-13.

[14] David Shub, *Lenin*, Garden City: Doubleday, 1948; Stanley W. Page, *Lenin and World Revolution*, New York: New York University Press, 1959; Stefan T. Possony, *Lenin: The Compulsive Revolutionary*, Chicago: Regnery, 1964; Richard Pipes, *U.S.-Soviet Relations in the Era of Detente*, Boulder: Westview Press, 1981, pp. 171-180.

Rejecting both these extremes, I would argue that Lenin can best be understood not as an enthusiastic champion of East-West co-operation nor as a wild-eyed fanatic, but as a pragmatic revolutionary. Despite the claims of Soviet spokesmen — claims which are often made by Western revisionist scholars as well — Lenin's hostility to the capitalist governments of the world was not simply a reaction to the policies of the West during the period of the Civil War and its intervention in 1918-1919. Lenin was a dedicated revolutionary who had committed his life to the revolutionary cause decades earlier. He viewed the world in class terms and dreamed of the eventual demise of capitalism, not just in Russia, but in all the advanced nations of the world. He firmly believed that the Russian proletariat, like the workers of Germany or France, had an obligation to work for revolution not just in their own country but throughout the world. A formal resolution which was adopted by the Bolsheviks in August 1917, months before they came to power and thus well before Western hostility to the Soviet regime had been demonstrated, stated quite clearly:

> The liquidation of imperialist domination puts before the working class of that country which shall first achieve the dictatorship of the proletarians and semiproletarians the task of supporting by every means (including armed force) the struggling proletariat of the other countries.[15]

On numerous occasions, Lenin unequivocally declared that it was not only permissible for Soviet Russia to intervene politically and militarily to assist the struggling proletariat of another nation, but *obligatory* for it to do so if this would facilitate the overthrow of capitalist regimes. Lenin allowed only one reason for not fulfilling this sacred revolutionary obligation: if the Russian Revolution was so weak and unstable that it could not render effective assistance to other nations without jeopardizing its own existence.

[15] *KPSS v rezoliutsiiakh*, Moscow: Gospolitizdat, 1954, 7th ed., I, pp. 373-374.

Lenin clearly articulated his position in 1918 during the debate over the Treaty of Brest Litovsk. He stated:

> [T]he interests of the world revolution demand that Soviet power, having overthrown the bourgeoisie in our country, should *help* that revolution, but that it should choose a *form* of help which is commensurate with its own strength.[16]

A year later, he declared: "Can we smash world imperialism today? It would be our duty to do it if we could, but you know that we cannot do it today any more than we could have overthrown Kerensky in March 1917."[17] In Lenin's succinct words: ". . . for an internationalist the question of state frontiers is a secondary, if not a tenth-rate question. . . ."[18]

Although the Bolsheviks were later to learn the value of diplomatic deception, their initial pronouncements were marked by refreshing candour. On 26 December 1917, *Pravda* openly published a decree, signed by Lenin and Trotsky, indicating that the Soviet government would promote the subversion of capitalist regimes by placing "at the disposal of the representatives abroad of the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs for the needs of the revolutionary movement two million rubles."[19] In addressing the delegates at the Seventh Party Congress in March 1918, Lenin made clear his determination to continue to promote revolution in Germany despite the treaty of Brest-Litovsk recently concluded with that country: "Yes, of course, we are violating the treaty; we have already violated it thirty or forty times."[20]

Lenin's revolutionary orientation is thus indisputable. His goal was the overthrow of the existing capitalist order and not the achievement of stable and long-term coexistence with it. However,

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[16] Lenin, *Sochineniia*, XXXV, p. 403 (emphasis in the original).
[17] *Ibid.*, XXXVIII, p. 13.
[18] *Ibid.*, XL, pp. 19-20.
[19] Cited in Edward Hallett Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution*, Baltimore: Penguin, 1966, III, p. 29.
[20] Lenin, *Sochineniia*, XXXVI, p. 22.

Lenin also placed great value on the preservation of the Russian Revolution, and he was not willing to put it at risk by launching a revolutionary crusade into Western Europe. He was highly pragmatic, and to enhance Soviet security he eagerly sought improved relations with capitalist governments. He was willing to establish formal diplomatic relations with them and to expand trade. He even endorsed the idea of political and military co-operation with bourgeois nations.

His approach was very different from that advocated in the early years of Soviet power by Nikolai Bukharin and the so-called "Left Communists" within the Bolshevik Party. During the intra-party debate on the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk in 1918, the Left Communists argued that it was totally impermissible for a proletarian government to conclude agreements or treaties with capitalist governments. They advanced two main arguments on behalf of this firm stand, one based primarily on moral considerations and the other on political calculations.

On moral grounds, they argued that it was a direct violation of socialist principles and ideals to traffic with the capitalist enemy. No matter how noble the ends, certain means were automatically excluded on grounds of principle. An agreement with the imperialist governments of Germany or France was as inconceivable to them as a pact with the Tsar. Both would dishonor and discredit the cause of socialism. If a socialist government were to strike a deal with the imperialist powers, it would be aiding the enemy and acquiescing in the perpetuation of an immoral political order. The only acceptable posture for the true revolutionary was one of total hostility to international capitalism.

This irreconcilable opposition to any dealings with the capitalist world was also buttressed by a second, more pragmatic argument. The Left Communists concluded that it would be impossible for the Soviet government to adhere to a principled and revolutionary foreign policy once it initiated relations with capitalist governments. With time, increased value was bound to be placed on the security of

the Soviet state, and the cause of international revolution would be neglected. Principles would soon be sacrificed, and concessions would be offered in an attempt to buy off the imperialist powers. In April 1918, the Left Communists issued a truly prophetic warning on the consequences of Lenin's tactics:

> In foreign policy aggressive tactics of exposure of the imperialist powers will be replaced by a policy of diplomatic manoeuvre by the Russian state amidst the imperialist powers. The Soviet republic will not only conclude trade agreements with them, but will also develop organic economic and political bonds with them, [and will] use their military and political support.[21]

Thus, it was not just a strong utopian streak, but shrewd realism as well, that motivated the Left Communists.

Lenin, who was a supreme voluntarist and optimist, dismissed both these objections. He said that anything that served to protect and strengthen the Russian Revolution was morally permissible. He was unafraid of the consequences of close economic and political ties between Soviet Russia and capitalist governments. In fact, Lenin went so far as to declare that under appropriate circumstances even a military alliance with imperialist governments would be acceptable, a stance that presaged Stalin's response to the Fascist threat in the 1930s and 1940s. Lenin stated: "[W]e have often said that an alliance with one imperialist state against another to consolidate the socialist republic is not objectionable in point of principle."[22] Lenin expected the eventual demise of international capitalism. But until this came to pass, he advocated a delicate policy of attempting to encourage foreign revolution while simultaneously seeking better relations with the West. Lenin was supremely self-confident, and he was unafraid of the negative side effects that expanded relations with capitalist nations might bring.

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[21] Cited in Leonard Schapiro, *The Origin of the Communist Autocracy*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1966, p. 136.

[22] Lenin, *Sochineniia*, XLII, p. 125. Also see, *ibid.*, XXXVI, p. 323 and XLII, p. 123.

In a highly influential book, *A Study of Bolshevism*, published in 1953, Nathan Leites argues that one of the basic traits of the Bolshevik political personality is the fear of being used, exploited or "duped," and that for this reason Bolsheviks are afraid to compromise and make concessions to achieve a political agreement.[23] This would appear to be true of Stalin, but not of Lenin. Lenin was confident of his ability to control a situation and was, in fact, convinced that he could get precisely *what he wanted* out of someone else. Lenin was willing to make concessions at the time of Brest-Litovsk, in the discussions with the American emissary, William Bullitt, during the Soviet-Polish talks of 1920, in negotiating with foreign capitalist entrepreneurs, and so forth, because he knew just what he wanted and just what he was willing to pay to get it.

Lenin's optimism and self-confidence were extremely important in shaping his approach to international politics. However, because this outlook derived more from Lenin's particular political personality than from any overt doctrines, it could not easily be passed on to his successors. Since Lenin had little respect for abstract theorizing, he did not attempt to systematize his ideas so as to create an explicit theory of international politics. This failure to do so was later to have unfortunate consequences. It meant that those attitudes and perspectives which potentially could have softened and moderated the dichotomic worldview so pervasive in Bolshevik thought were left largely undeveloped. Following Lenin's death, they could easily be overlooked or ignored by individuals with a different temperament. This is precisely what happened when Stalin came to power.

[23] Nathan Leites, *A Study of Bolshevism*, Glencoe: Free Press, 1953, pp. 27-63.

STALIN: DOGMATISM AND RIGIDITY

Although Lenin left an ambiguous doctrinal legacy, there was nothing ambiguous about Soviet foreign policy doctrine by the time Stalin's rule came to an end three decades later. In building upon Lenin's rather diffuse legacy, Stalin accentuated the negative and constantly emphasized the intensity and irreconcilability of the conflict between capitalism and socialism. Leninist grays gave way to Stalinist black-and-white. Whereas Lenin's approach to international politics reflected a high degree of self-confidence, optimism, voluntarism, and flexibility, Stalin's was constrained by his insecurity, pessimism, determinism, and rigidity.

Stalin's approach to international politics was permeated not just by the belief that the Soviet Union lived in a hostile and threatening world, but also by the conviction that *there was little that the Soviet Union could do to alter this situation.* It is the fatalistic determinism of Stalinist thought that distinguishes it most sharply from its Leninist antecedents and from the more optimistic perspective that Khrushchev later adopted.[24]

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[24] The Stalinist worldview is discussed in Robert C. Tucker, *The Soviet Political Mind*, New York: Praeger, 1963, pp. 20-35, 166-179; Elliot R. Goodman, *The Soviet Design for a World State*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1960; and Frederic S. Burin, "The Communist Doctrine of the Inevitability of War," *The American Political Science Review*, LVII, No. 2, 1963, pp. 334-354. I have also made use of Paul Marantz, "Prelude to Detente: Doctrinal Change Under Khrushchev," *International Studies Quarterly* XIX, No. 4, 1975, pp. 501-528, and Paul Marantz, "Changing Soviet Conceptions of East-West Relations," *International Journal*, XXXVII, No. 2, 1982, pp. 220-240.

In recent decades, the West has become so accustomed to fervent Soviet professions of fidelity to peaceful coexistence that it is easy to forget just how sharply the post-Stalin conception of East-West relations diverges from the view that prevailed until Stalin's death in 1953. The Stalinist worldview was based upon a series of mutually reinforcing propositions which all pointed to the same gloomy conclusion: the Soviet Union was confronted by implacable enemies with whom no real co-operation was possible because they were resolutely dedicated to the destruction of the world's first socialist state.

A stark class-based interpretation of international politics served as the cornerstone of the entire edifice. A country's foreign policy was said to be unalterably determined by its economic system. The capitalist state was viewed as nothing more than the obedient tool of the bourgeoisie. The ruling capitalist elite was perceived as fearing the direct threat that socialism posed to its privileged class position and as being determined to use the state apparatus at its disposal to wage a total, unceasing struggle against the Soviet Union.

The analysis contained in Lenin's *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism* remained official dogma throughout Stalin's life. The inescapable laws of capitalism were seen as dictating not only hostility toward the Soviet Union but also the inevitability of war among the capitalist states themselves. However, the fact that the Soviet Union's foes would be warring among themselves was of little consolation to Stalin, since he did not believe that the Soviet Union could retreat into splendid isolation while its enemies annihilated one another.

On the contrary, the doctrine of the inevitability of war, as it was interpreted during the Stalin years, could not but encourage fatalism and passivity. Soviet security was seen as being directly threatened, since it was held to be virtually inevitable that once the capitalist nations began to fight among themselves, war would expand beyond its initial confines and engulf the Soviet Union. Yet despite this clear and present danger, the Soviet Union was seen as being largely

powerless. The laws of capitalism and the resulting contradictions among the capitalist states were held to be the central pivot of international politics. In Stalin's view, there was little the Soviet Union could do, except perhaps to delay for a short time the next terrible catastrophe. International politics were shaped not by the initiatives and responses of Soviet diplomacy, but by inexorable economic laws beyond the control of individual statesmen and nations. As long as imperialism continued to exist, war would remain inevitable.

Similarly, Soviet pessimism concerning the prospects for even partial arms control remained undiminished as long as Stalin was alive. As far back as the early 1920s, the Soviet Union had begun to advance grandiose plans for international disarmament. On the surface, this appeared to mark a sharp break with pre-revolutionary attitudes. Prior to 1917, the advocacy of disarmament was regarded as both foolish and harmful. It was seen as foolish because disarmament could not be achieved as long as capitalism, with its inherent domestic violence and recurring international wars, continued to exist; and it was regarded as harmful because it might sow false illusions among the masses and deflect them from their historical mission of forcibly overthrowing the capitalist order. But the shift in the 1920s from earlier views was more apparent than real. Once a Soviet state came into existence, the Bolshevik leaders recognized that it was now in their interest to appear moderate by advocating disarmament, even though — or precisely because — they believed it was unattainable as long as capitalism existed. The Soviet leadership was willing to advocate disarmament because it was absolutely convinced that the capitalist powers would never accept its proposals. By advancing proposals that the West would reject, the Soviet Union hoped to improve its image and expose the "true" predatory nature of imperialism, thereby causing the masses to shed their reformist illusions.[25]

[25] Walter C. Clemens, Jr., "Lenin on Disarmament," *Slavic Review*, XXIII, No. 3, 1964, pp. 504-525.

Soviet pronouncements were quite explicit on this score. For example, the theses adopted in 1928 by the Sixth Congress of the Comintern pointedly declared:

> The aim of the Soviet [disarmament] proposals is not to spread pacifist illusions, but to destroy them; not to support capitalism by ignoring or toning down its shady sides, but to propagate the fundamental Marxian postulate, that disarmament and the abolition of war are possible only with the fall of capitalism. The Soviet Government called upon the imperialists who talk cynically about disarming, actually to disarm; it tore down the pacifist masks from their faces. It goes without saying that not a single Communist thought for a moment that the imperialists would accept the Soviet disarmament proposals.[26]

The Comintern theses went on to explain that even though it was permissible for the Soviet government to advocate disarmament — since this would attract supporters to the Soviet cause and expose the evils of capitalism — the proletariat in the capitalist countries must *not* call for disarmament. To do so would only confuse the masses and foster the reformist illusion that disarmament was possible without an armed uprising against the capitalist system.[27] A further indication of how little importance was attached to disarmament throughout the Stalin period is the fact that when the official two-volume *Diplomatic Dictionary* was published, in 1948-1950, it did not contain even a brief entry on this subject. In contrast, when the revised edition of this work was published in the early 1960s, it devoted more than twenty pages to the discussion of disarmament.[28]

Stalinist doctrine ruled out not just arms control, but even the far more limited goal of reducing international tension. As long as Stalin reigned, there were few calls for a reduction of East-West tension for

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[26] *International Press Correspondence*, VIII, No. 83, 1928, p. 1596.

[27] *Ibid.*, p. 1597; "The Disarmament Question," (editorial), *The Communist International*, V, No. 10, 1928, p. 222.

[28] A. Gromyko, *et al.*, eds., *Diplomaticheskii slovar'*, Moscow: Gospolitizdat, 1964, III, pp. 6-27; A. Vyshinskii and S. Lozovski, eds., *Diplomaticheskii slovar'*, Moscow: Gospolitizdat, 1950.

the simple reason that he did not view such a goal as being either attainable or desirable. International tension was not seen as an unnecessary impediment to improved East-West relations or as an unfortunate consequence of misperception and misunderstanding which could be cleared up through increased contact and improved relations. On the contrary, a high level of tension was accepted as an inescapable consequence of the on-going life-and-death struggle currently taking place between two bitterly opposed social systems.

Tension reduction was viewed not just as an unrealistic goal but as a dangerous one as well. Much like his ultra-hawkish counterparts in the West, Stalin was more comfortable when tension was high, and he became nervous whenever anyone suggested that it could and should be significantly reduced. A high level of tension served a crucial purpose for Stalin. It made it easier for him to justify his constant purges, his Draconian policies (such as forced collectivization and rapid industrialization), and his brutal domination over all dimensions of Soviet life. He feared that a relaxation of tension would lead to a loss of "vigilance," to an underestimation of the imperialist threat, and to the growth of dangerous illusions about the possibility of improving relations with the Soviet Union's treacherous enemies. A high level of tension was far more preferable, since it hindered the growth of such illusions and made it easier for him to maintain his iron grip on the country.

Given this outlook, it is hardly surprising that Stalin failed to develop a doctrine of peaceful coexistence. His references to peaceful coexistence were as infrequent and inconsequential as Lenin's, despite the fact that he ruled the Soviet Union for a far longer period of time, a period during which the Soviet Union did manage to coexist — sometimes peacefully, sometimes less so — with the capitalist world.

In view of the great prominence of the concept of peaceful coexistence in Soviet doctrine during recent decades, it is striking just how little use Stalin had for this concept. In the quarter of a century extending from 1928 to 1953, when Stalin so completely dominated

Soviet politics, there were four Party Congresses (in 1930, 1934, 1939, and 1952). At none of these did Stalin even utter the phrase "peaceful coexistence," and the same is true for all his public speeches throughout the 1930s, 1940s, and the 1950s.

It appears that during all these years, Stalin is recorded as having referred to peaceful coexistence on only three occasions. In each case, his remarks were exceedingly brief, were devoid of any real content, and were directed primarily at a foreign audience: an interview in 1936 with the correspondent Roy Howard, a reply in May 1948 to a letter from the US presidential candidate Henry Wallace, and a statement in 1952 responding to the questions from a group of American newspaper editors.[29] The search for a united front against Hitler, the alliance of World War II, and the peace campaign of the early 1950s all took place without Stalin championing peaceful coexistence.

The concept of peaceful coexistence implied at least a minimal degree of civility between capitalist and socialist states. One reason that Stalin had so little use for this concept is that he believed that the far more antagonistic image of "capitalist encirclement" was a much better shorthand expression for representing the dynamics of East-West relations. He viewed the Soviet Union as an isolated and besieged island precariously existing in an unrelentingly hostile capitalist sea. He insisted, right to his death, that the danger of capitalist attack was ever-present and that above all else the Soviet Union must never relax its vigilance, since class enemies were ready to strike at the first sign of weakness.

Throughout his life, Stalin also insisted upon the continued validity of his distinction between the "complete" and "final" victory of socialism, a distinction that he had first formulated during his political battles with Trotsky in the 1920s. Stalin argued that even in

[29] I. V. Stalin, *Sochineniia*, edited by Robert H. McNeal, Stanford: The Hoover Institution, 1967, I, p. 128; *ibid.*, III, pp. 104, 305-306.

the absence of successful revolutions in other countries, the Russian proletariat could proceed to build a fully socialist society in the Soviet Union by its own efforts. In this sense, the "complete" victory of socialism in an isolated Russia was said to be entirely possible. However, he went on to assert that socialism in Russia would never be secure from the danger of counter-revolution as long as international revolution was delayed. A capitalist restoration would remain a constant danger until revolution spread to the most important capitalist countries of Europe and North America. Ensuring the irreversible "final" victory of socialism in Russia was not within the power of the Soviet people alone. No matter how successful and thorough the revolution was within Russia, these gains could be erased at any time by Moscow's foreign enemies. Thus the notions of capitalist encirclement and the impossibility of the "final" victory of socialism fully harmonized with Stalin's call for constant vigilance and militant opposition to the wicked world of capitalism.

It is not surprising that such an uncompromising view of international politics was embraced in the 1920s and 1930s, when the Soviet Union was indeed a weak, isolated state menaced by hostile neighbors. What is surprising and highly significant is that this perspective remained rigidly unaltered throughout the subsequent years of Stalin's rule, despite the very different circumstances in which the Soviet Union found itself. Stalin adamantly refused to rethink his basic conceptions of East-West relations, despite such momentous events as the Soviet-Western alliance of World War II, the postwar creation of Communist buffer states in Eastern Europe, the sharp contraction in the strength of the Soviet Union's main European rivals (Germany, Great Britain, and France), the establishment of a Communist regime in China, and the Soviet acquisition of atomic weapons.

There is a good deal of circumstantial evidence that by the late 1940s and early 1950s some highly placed Soviet officials were beginning to question the key postulates of Stalin's fatalistic worldview. Kremlinological evidence suggests that not everyone believed in the continued existence of capitalist encirclement and the

inevitability of war, and that some officials believed that these concepts hindered efforts to protect Soviet security and enhance its international influence.[30]

Stalin, however, was completely unwilling to rethink his approach. For him, the world of the 1950s was no different from that of the 1920s or 1930s. Capitalist enmity, Soviet vulnerability, and the fundamental incompatibility of the two systems were in his view unchanged. Those who entertained the hope that the Soviet Union's postwar successes had created the basis for a less tense relationship with the West were soon set straight. In 1951, *Bol'shevik*, the country's most authorative ideological journal, pointedly declared:

> The establishment of People's Democracies in a series of countries contiguous to the U.S.S.R. has been mistakenly interpreted by some comrades as the liquidation of capitalist encirclement. Apparently these comrades look upon capitalist encirclement as a purely geographical concept, which, of course, is completely incorrect.[31]

Even at this late date, the traditional perspective was still being upheld. Capitalist encirclement was declared to be a political concept, not a geographical one. Since capitalist encirclement was viewed as a manifestation of the immutable class hatred of imperialism for socialism, it remained fully in force despite the postwar expansion of communism into Eastern Europe and China.

Stalin's last major pronouncement, which was published in October 1952, just five months before his death, contained a lengthy discussion of the question of whether a new world war should still be regarded as inevitable. Here, too, the traditional orthodoxy was tenaciously defended. Stalin took note of certain unnamed "comrades" who were questioning this view.

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[30] Tucker, *The Soviet Political Mind*, pp. 20-35.

[31] V. Mikheev, "O kapitalisticheskom okruzhenii," *Bol'shevik*, 1951, No. 16, p. 61.

> Some comrades affirm that, in consequence of the development of international conditions after the second world war, wars among capitalist countries have ceased to be inevitable. They consider that the contradictions between the camp of socialism and the camp of capitalism are greater than the contradictions among capitalist countries, that the U.S.A. has made other capitalist countries sufficiently subservient to itself to prevent them from going to war with one another and weakening one another, that forward-looking people of capitalism have learned enough from two world wars which have inflicted serious damage on the whole capitalist world [not] to permit themselves again to draw the capitalist countries into war among themselves, that, in view of all this, wars among capitalist countries have ceased to be inevitable.[32]

These arguments were immediately dismissed:

> These comrades are mistaken. They see the external appearances which glitter on the surface but fail to see those profound forces which, though operating imperceptibly, will nevertheless determine the course of events.[33]

For Stalin, the situation was crystal clear. Neither the advent of the nuclear age nor the expansion of socialism beyond the confines of a single country had changed anything. Further Soviet successes would also mean little. There was only one way to change things. "In order to eliminate the inevitability of wars, imperialism must be destroyed."[34] Whatever private doubts some of Stalin's associates may have had about the validity and utility of this analysis, as long as the dreaded dictator was alive, they had no choice but to fall in line and accept this stark worldview.

What, then, were the policy implications of an outlook which fatalistically regarded world war as inevitable, saw disarmament as

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[32] Stalin, *Sochineniia*, III, pp. 226-227; Leo Gruliow, ed., *Current Soviet Policies*, New York: Praeger, 1953, p. 7.

[33] Stalin, *Sochineniia*, III, p. 227.

[34] *Ibid.*, p. 231.

an unattainable objective, conceived of capitalist encirclement as defining the Soviet Union's relation to the international system, and postulated that security against the restoration of capitalism in the Soviet Union was impossible to achieve within the existing international order? Clearly, even this bleak view did not rule out some degree of manoeuvre and tactical adaptation in Soviet diplomacy. For example, in the mid-1930s, the Soviet Union entered the League of Nations, signed mutual security treaties with the capitalist governments of France and Czechoslovakia, and urged the policy of the popular front on foreign Communist parties.

But a careful reading of the statements which Stalin made during the 1930s suggests that he never really had any great hope that these policies would succeed. They were undertaken out of sheer desperation, in the face of a mortal threat from Germany and Japan, because no other alternative existed. Moreover, even had a common front against Hitler been forged, there is every reason to believe that prevailing Soviet assumptions about the capitalist world would have sharply limited its effectiveness, its scope, and certainly its duration. It would have been no more than a fragile, shallow, and short-lived marriage of convenience.

A brief tactical alliance with capitalist governments was clearly possible for Stalin. He could conceivably have allied his country with Great Britain and France in 1938, in the same way that he came to terms with Hitler the following year, that is, in a temporary pact of sworn enemies who momentarily shared a common interest in accomplishing a very specific objective. However, what was not possible for Stalin was a long-term effort to build patiently upon a set of mutual interests, to promote greater economic and political interchange between East and West, and to overcome mutual suspicion and mistrust. In the 1930s, the Stalinist worldview greatly contributed to the failure to achieve collective security against Hitler, and in the post-World War II period it promoted the fatalistic acceptance of a state of permanent cold war.

Given Stalin's rigid and uncompromising hostility toward the

capitalist world, there was very little that the West could have done to improve relations during the period of his rule. There may well have been some missed opportunities in the early 1920s, when Lenin was at the helm, or even more so in the mid-1950s under Khrushchev. But Stalin was so fixed in his insecurity, suspiciousness, and hostility that there was little that the West could have done to alter his outlook. The West could do little more than hold the line — namely follow a policy of "containment" — and wait for new and more flexible leaders to appear in the Kremlin. Stalin's death in March 1953 was a watershed event that opened up opportunities for creative diplomacy which simply had not existed before.

KHRUSHCHEV'S DOCTRINAL REVOLUTION

Stalin's conceptual rigidity is all the more apparent when it is contrasted with the remarkable innovativeness — and even iconoclasm — of Khrushchev. Within just four years, from 1956 to 1960, Khrushchev decisively transformed Soviet conceptions of East-West relations.[35]

In February 1956, at the Twentieth Party Congress, Khrushchev forthrightly declared that the time-honored theory of the inevitability of war was no longer valid. In announcing this position, he specifically embraced many of the arguments that Stalin had so vehemently rejected just a few years earlier. Khrushchev contended that the growing strength of the socialist camp meant that new opportunities now existed for creative diplomacy and for real efforts to prevent the outbreak of war.[36] In 1959, at the Twenty-First Party Congress, Khrushchev carried this new position one step further and provided additional arguments on behalf of a more optimistic and open-ended view of world politics. He proclaimed that it was fully

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[35] The conceptual changes introduced by Khrushchev are discussed in Goodman, *The Soviet Design for a World State*; Franklyn Griffiths, "Images, Politics, and Learning in Soviet Behavior toward the United States," unpublished doctoral dissertation, Columbia University, 1972; Tucker, *The Soviet Political Mind*, pp. 201-222; and William Zimmerman, *Soviet Perspectives on International Relations, 1956-1967*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969. I have also drawn upon Marantz, "Prelude to Detente: Doctrinal Change Under Khrushchev," pp. 501-528 and Marantz, "Changing Soviet Conceptions of East-West Relations," pp. 220-240.

[36] *The Current Digest of the Soviet Press*, VIII, No. 4, 1956, p. 11. (Henceforth this journal is cited as *C.D.S.P.*)

possible, even while capitalism still existed in the West, to create an international system in which world war would cease to be possible.[37]

The traditional Soviet view had been that the very idea of peace under capitalism was a chimera. As long as capitalism existed, world war was regarded as inevitable. The only way to abolish the inevitability of war was to abolish capitalism, and for this reason the struggle for revolution must take precedence over the struggle for peace. In contrast, Khrushchev was now saying that the struggle for peace — of which diplomatic negotiations between East and West were a significant part — had acquired an entirely new significance, because such efforts could lead to the banishment of the scourge of war long before socialism was able to supplant world capitalism.

A further impetus toward regarding East-West diplomacy in a new light was provided by the repudiation of the traditional view that disarmament was impossible to achieve under capitalism. According to Leninist orthodoxy, once the contradictions within the capitalist camp intensified and war became imminent, legalistic restraints would be totally incapable of preventing the imperialist governments from resorting to a massive military buildup. Given this view, Soviet spokesmen could not begin to accept disarmament as a realistic goal until it was admitted — as was done in 1956 — that war was no longer inevitable.

Yet, as important as the repudiation of the inevitability of war was, even this development by itself was not sufficient to call into question long-held Soviet assumptions concerning the impossibility of disarmament. There was still the doctrinal proposition that the policies of the capitalist countries were tightly controlled by a small ruling class, a group that reaped such immense profits from the manufacture of arms and war-related material that it would never accept meaningful arms control. It was only when this tenet of Soviet doctrine was also abandoned that it became possible to accept the proposition that the

[37] *Ibid.*, XI, No. 4, 1959, pp. 19-20.

Soviet Union and the West might be able to agree to genuine arms control.

Khrushchev delivered a major speech on Soviet military policy in January 1960. In this speech, Khrushchev broke with the traditional orthodoxy and cautiously signaled a new approach toward the understanding of the prospects for arms control. He noted the view — which he disingenuously attributed only to various people "in the West" — that "disarmament threatens grave consequences for the economy of the capitalist countries." In rebuttal, he declared: "The least that can be said about such assertions is that they are completely unsubstantiated."[38]

New "evidence" was quickly found to support this unorthodox position. It was stated that economic trends within the capitalist countries meant that fewer and fewer members of the ruling elite had a direct economic stake in the arms race, and for this reason disarmament had now become a genuine possibility:

> Data available on military production in capitalist countries show that only a comparatively small segment of the monopoly bourgeoisie is directly or indirectly battening on the manufacture of the engines of war. . . . And as military technology continues to advance and war orders become concentrated in fewer hands the number of capitalists enriching themselves on armaments is bound to diminish further.[39]

In advancing this line, Soviet commentators chose to play down the fact that this marked a total repudiation of past doctrine. But the transformation of Soviet perspectives was striking. By the early 1960s, disarmament was enthusiastically endorsed as a practical and attainable goal, not just in propaganda directed toward the West, but also in all of the most important sources of domestic doctrinal legitimization — the new Party programme, *Osnovy Marksizma-*

[38] *Ibid.*, XII, No. 2, 1960, p. 9.

[39] L. Urban, "Some Economic Aspects of Disarmament," *World Marxist Review*, VI, No. 8, 1963, p. 24.

Leninizma, Khrushchev's speeches, *Kommunist*, *Pravda*, etc.[40] Soviet optimism was based upon the newly articulated view that those elements within capitalist ruling circles which did not have a direct economic stake in military production, and were actually harmed by the militarization of Western economies, would be motivated by their economic self-interest to co-operate in the search for mutually beneficial arms control. This upbeat perspective greatly expanded the parameters of Soviet diplomacy.

Soviet optimism was also reflected in Khrushchev's unequivocal declaration at the Twenty-First Party Congress in 1959 that: "The capitalist encirclement no longer exists for our country.... The danger of capitalist restoration in the Soviet Union is ruled out. This means that *the triumph of socialism is not only complete but final.*"[41] This repudiation of Stalinist dogma was more than symbolic. It meant that the survival of the Soviet regime was no longer viewed as hanging precariously in the balance. The Soviet leadership could now approach East-West negotiations with a new feeling of confidence, with a broader agenda of issues in mind, and without a paralyzing fear that they would be manipulated, out-manoeuvred, or overwhelmed by a vastly more powerful opponent. A more normal process of diplomatic give-and-take could now be envisaged.

This new-found sense of security also meant that a high level of international tension was no longer regarded as essential to the maintenance of the Soviet regime. Khrushchev confidently believed that a constantly growing standard of living — combined with political controls less repressive than those used by Stalin — would be sufficient to ensure the loyalty of the Soviet population. Acute tension came to be viewed not just as unnecessary but as a harmful feature of international politics which could and should be greatly reduced. Soviet spokesmen now argued that a high level of international tension was undesirable because it increased the

[40] Alexander Dallin, *et al.*, *The Soviet Union, Arms Control, and Disarmament*, New York: Praeger, 1964, pp. 238-276.

[41] *C.D.S.P.*, XI, No. 5, 1959, p. 17 (emphasis in the original).

danger of nuclear war, impeded revolution by heightening repression within the capitalist countries, enhanced the political fortune of bellicose elements within Western ruling circles, and fuelled a wasteful arms race.

Stalin's pessimistic determinism was replaced by a new sense of optimistic voluntarism. Acute tension was viewed not as an unavoidable consequence of the international class struggle, but as an unnecessary legacy of the Cold War. International tension was blamed on such potentially reversible factors as bad communication, mistrust, and the relative lack of commercial and political contact between the East and the West.[42] Thus, the need to lessen mistrust and to reduce international tension was seen as one of the reasons why the Soviet Union should carry out an active foreign policy and strive to increase East-West interchange in the realms of economics and politics.

In this context, one of Khrushchev's most significant ideological innovations — one that has often not been sufficiently appreciated in the West — was to provide a fundamentally new basis for the conceptualization of Soviet-American relations. Lenin and Stalin automatically regarded the most powerful capitalist state as the leader of the imperialist forces hostile to the Soviet Union, and hence they saw it as the Soviet Union's main enemy. For them, the central task of Soviet diplomacy was to utilize the contradictions that existed within the imperialist camp so as to turn the other capitalist states against whichever country headed the forces of imperialism at any given moment. In the 1920s, Great Britain was considered the dominant world power, and for this reason the Soviet Union sought to capitalize upon tensions within the British Empire and to fuel Anglo-German antagonism by encouraging German resentment

[42] Khrushchev's ideologists even went so far as to substitute a form of optimistic determinism for Stalin's pessimism by declaring that: "... the U.S. imperialists are powerless to halt the relaxation of tension which is a result of objective development." "The Communists are Stepping Up the Struggle for Peace," (editorial), *World Marxist Review* III, No. 7, 1960, pp. 4-5.

over the Versailles settlement. After World War II, when the United States superseded Britain as the world's most powerful capitalist state, this approach led to a policy of stimulating West European nationalism and exploiting European resentment of America's new global power. What was totally lacking in the traditional view of Soviet diplomacy was any suggestion of either the possiblity or utility of long-term Soviet cooperation with its most powerful capitalist adversary.

Khrushchev filled this void. It was argued that in the nuclear age the Soviet Union and the United States, as the world's only two superpowers, had a special joint responsiblity to avoid a nuclear holocaust and to regulate conflict anywhere in the world. As Khrushchev stated in a speech delivered in Dnepropetrovsk in July 1959:

> Our country and the U.S.A. are the two most powerful states in the world. If other countries come to blows, they can still be separated. But if war starts between America and our country, no one else will be able to stop it. It will be a catastrophe on a tremendous scale.[43]

This view was frequently and fervently espoused by Khrushchev, much to the dismay of the Chinese who feared that their own national interests would suffer if Khrushchev's designs for a superpower duopoly were realized.

Secondly, and more significantly, a new view of foreign policy decision-making within the capitalist countries was developed during the Khrushchev years. Stalinist doctrine had held that the foreign policy of a capitalist state was a direct product of the class interests of the ruling bourgeoisie. Because their privileged economic position was automatically threatened by any Soviet success — domestic or foreign — they could not be anything other than irreconcilably hostile to the Soviet Union. The most powerful capitalist state, having the most at stake, would naturally be the Soviet Union's most implacable and dangerous foe.

[43] N. S. Khrushchev, *World without Arms, World without Wars*, Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, n.d., I, p. 557.

By 1959, Khrushchev came to the conclusion that it was possible to significantly improve Soviet-American relations. However, any policy that he might follow directed toward realizing this goal would sharply conflict with Stalinist doctrine. Nor was it just a matter of doctrinal niceties. The orthodox Marxist-Leninist position was fervently championed by the Chinese leadership, and for the first time since Trotsky's defeat in the 1920s, the Soviet Union's rulers were being subjected to a sustained ideological attack from within the Communist movement.

When Khrushchev returned from his official visit to the United States in September 1959 — the first ever by a Soviet leader — he was full of optimism for the future prospects of Soviet-American relations. In speech after speech, he lavished unprecedented praise upon the American president, Dwight Eisenhower. For example, in reporting to the Soviet people on the results of his dramatic twelve-day sojourn in the United States, Khrushchev stated:

> I can tell you in all frankness, dear comrades, that as a result of my talks and discussions of concrete questions with the U.S. President, I have gained the impression that he sincerely wishes too see the end of the "cold war," to create normal relations between our countries, to help to improve relations among all countries.[44]

A few days later, at an official reception in Beijing, Khrushchev shocked his hosts by reiterating this heretical view:

> In our times the Heads of Government of some capitalist countries have begun to show a certain inclination for a realistic understanding of the situation existing in the world. When I talked to President Eisenhower — and I have just returned from the United States — my impression was that the President of the United States, and he has the support of many people, is aware of the need for relaxing international tension.[45]

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[44] *Ibid.*, II, p. 332.
[45] *Ibid.*, II, p. 349.

Khrushchev seemed to be suggesting that the President of the United States, the hand-picked executor of the interests of the American bourgeoisie, was interested in co-operating with the world's foremost workers' state. How were such statements to be reconciled with the major tenets of the official doctrine? Did it not make a mockery of the traditional understanding of imperialism to suggest that tension between the two camps could be relaxed and that the American capitalists were prepared to co-operate in good faith with the Soviet Union?

The leaders of the Communist Party of China certainly thought so, and they wasted no time in raising these embarassing questions. Chinese spokesmen charged that Khrushchev was allowing himself to be led astray by the West's cynical "peace gestures" and was neglecting Lenin's analysis of the inherent and immutable aggressiveness of imperialism. According to the Chinese, American imperialism was innately aggressive, and it could no more change its nature than a tiger could change its stripes. The only way to respond to this threat was by energetically rallying the peoples of the world in a united effort to isolate and weaken American imperialism. The present apparent "moderation" of the United States was viewed as a deliberate deception which in no way reflected the existence of a more reasonable group within the Western camp. The Chinese asserted that from a revolutionary standpoint none of the minor differences of opinion that might exist within the ruling circles of a country such as the United States were of any real significance.[46] This strident response of the Chinese, which was a faithful reiteration of the Stalinist view, provides a graphic illustration of just how far Khrushchev had moved in his revision of traditional perspectives on East-West relations.

The Soviet leadership responded to the Chinese ideological assault not by retreating, but by broadening and buttressing its new doctrinal position. As a result, a fundamentally new view of

[46] The Chinese position is set forth in the documents reprinted in G. F. Hudson, et al., *The Sino-Soviet Dispute*, New York: Praeger, 1963, pp. 72-77, 94-99, 139-140.

imperialism was articulated, one that not only served to legitimize Khrushchev's current policies but which also opened the way for a radically different approach to international politics. During the early Khrushchev years of the mid-1950s, Soviet spokesmen had been rather vague in their occasional references to "sober voices" and "far-sighted" public figures in the West. By 1960, as a consequence of the verbal assault emanating from Beijing, the Soviet leadership moved to clarify its position, to make it more explicit, and to give it a sound doctrinal foundation. It was now argued that a well-defined process of splitting or differentiation (*razmezhevanie*) was occurring within the various capitalist countries, especially the United States. As a result of this process it was no longer correct to speak of only a few isolated sober voices. The ruling elite within individual countries was dividing, and two distinct and radically different groups were emerging.

One group was said to be bellicose and virulently anti-Soviet, while the other was described as being sober, moderate, fully cognizant of the catastrophic consequences of nuclear war, and sincerely interested in improved relations with the Soviet Union. These two very different factions of the ruling bourgeoisie were portrayed as being locked in a sharp struggle for power whose precise outcome was an open question. The final outcome was not preordained and would be decided not just by immutable economic forces, but by the interplay of complex and uncertain political factors as well. There was, according to Khrushchev and his colleagues, a very real possibility that moderate forces would triumph in many of the leading capitalist countries, including even the United States.[47]

This rather unorthodox view had important implications for the Soviet conceptualization of East-West relations. It suggested that there was a real basis for genuine co-operation even between the Soviet Union, the world's most powerful socialist state, and the United States, the leading force in the imperialist camp. Whereas

[47] See Khrushchev's speech of 6 January 1961, in *Kommunist*, 1961, No. 1, pp. 23-24 and the speech of Otto Kuusinen reprinted in Hudson, *The Sino-Soviet Dispute*, pp. 119-120.

traditional Leninist doctrine provided a rationale for the cynical manipulation of the less powerful capitalist states to turn them *against* the leading imperialist power of the day, Khrushchev was elaborating, for the first time in Soviet history, a clear argument on behalf of long-term co-operation *with* the world's most powerful capitalist state. This represented a major transformation in the Soviet worldview.

In keeping with this innovative perspective, the whole process of negotiation between East and West was viewed in a new light. Previously, under Lenin and Stalin, the concepts of "compromise" and "concession" had a strong pejorative connotation. They implied weakness and inferiority. Lenin argued that a skilled revolutionary, just like an experienced general, had to know when to retreat, when to avoid battle, and when to give way before the greater strength of his opponent. Under such circumstances, concessions to the enemy were perfectly permissible. But for Lenin and Stalin, such compromises were always regarded as forced concessions dictated by temporary weakness. They were tactical manoeuvres to gain time, to avoid defeat by superior forces, and to utilize contradictions within the enemy camp. They had no real legitimacy. They did not reflect any common interests, and they were to be renounced as soon as the Soviet Union's temporary weakness had been overcome.

There was little room for meaningful diplomacy in the Stalinist view of the world. It was not believed that there were any misconceptions which could be erased by open discussion, or that there were significant common interests which could be enlarged by patient negotiation. At times, a very temporary conjunction of interests might allow a modicum of co-operation, but this could not last very long or go very deep. Above all, one must never have any illusions about the class-hatred of the enemy. In the words of one of Stalin's leading ideologists, which were published just a few month's before Stalin's death:

> Leninism teaches that it is impossible to "appease" the imperialists by tiny concessions as is suggested by various kinds of liberals who have

> broken with the theory of the class struggle and have slipped into a position of right-wing opportunism.[48]

Under Khrushchev, the concepts of genuine negotiation and mutual compromise took on a whole new meaning and acquired a new legitimacy. Compromise was viewed not as a product of temporary weakness but as an inescapable feature of the relations between sovereign states. Different states unavoidably had different interests, and the only way they could peacefully exist together was through a process of mutual given-and-take. In the words of Khrushchev:

> To put it bluntly, under peaceful coexistence states must meet each other halfway in the interest of peace. The peaceful coexistence of states with differing social systems in itself assumes elements of mutual concessions and mutual consideration of interests, since otherwise normal relations cannot be built among states.[49]

The argument was made that through a process of negotiation, the Soviet Union could advance shared interests, especially if it was dealing with "far-sighted" representatives of the moderate wing of the bourgeoisie. In such a process, it was perfectly permissible to make concessions on matters which were more important to the other side than to oneself, in return for reciprocal concessions which promoted one's own paramount interests. Thus, the tactical, manipulative element in the Soviet view of negotiations was greatly reduced.

The significance of these innovations was further enhanced by bringing them together in a newly expanded doctrine of peaceful coexistence. Khrushchev thus became the founder and creator of the contemporary Soviet conception of peaceful coexistence, something that Soviet spokesmen are presently unable to acknowledge (be-

[48] D. Chesnokov, "Rech' I. V. Stalina na XIX s'ezde kommunistichskoi partii Sovetskogo Soiuza," *Kommunist*, 1953, No. 2, p. 22.
[49] *C.D.S.P.*, XI, No. 44, 1959, p. 4.

cause of his fall from grace in 1964) and that many Western observers even now fail to appreciate fully. It is true, of course, that the term peaceful coexistence had been used on occasion by Soviet officials since the earliest days of the regime. However, prior to Khrushchev, it never enjoyed any great prominence and it lacked any real operative significance for the conduct of Soviet foreign policy.

Under Stalin, the meaning attached to the term peaceful coexistence was sharply limited and tightly circumscribed. Peaceful coexistence meant no more than an armed truce, the absence for the moment of war between two deeply antagonistic social systems. It did not imply the possiblity — or even the desirability — of meaningful co-operation between East and West.

It was this restricted conception of peaceful coexistence that Khrushchev explicitly criticized at the Twentieth Party Congress. He stated: "We believe that countries with differing social systems can do more than exist side by side. It is necessary to proceed further, to improve relations, strengthen confidence among countries and cooperate."[50] Later Soviet commentaries developed this line of thought further. An editorial published in *Kommunist* in 1957 enthusiastically declared:

> For them [the Soviet people] this Leninist principle [peaceful coexistence] is the general line of foreign policy. Coexistence is not only the absence of war between the two systems, but also peaceful economic competition between them and constructive cooperation in the regions of economics, politics, and culture. The Socialist states proceed on the basis that given contemporary conditions it is fully possible to work out a concrete and real program of broad economic cooperation between the two systems, including the expansion of trade, joint assistance to aid the industrialization of the underdeveloped nations, the accomplishment of joint projects for the transformation of nature, etc.[51]

[50] *Ibid.*, VIII, No. 4, 1956, p. 11.

[51] "Leninskii kurs na mirnoe sosushchestvovanie," (editorial), *Kommunist*, 1957, No. 11, p. 5.

Another article in the same journal stated:

> Cooperation is possible where there are common interests. Are there such interests between socialist and capitalist states in the area of international relations? Certainly there are, and first of all concerning the preservation of peace.[52]

The Khrushchevian concept of peaceful coexistence was clearly much less restricted than Stalin's. It connoted not just the absence of war but mutual co-operation to advance common interests.

Khrushchev was a tireless exponent of peaceful coexistence. He often referred to it more times in a single speech than Stalin did in several decades. He took what had previously been a minor element in Soviet doctrine and elevated it to a central place in Soviet conceptions of East-West relations, declaring it to be nothing less than the "general line" of Soviet foreign policy. The more that Khrushchev's conception of peaceful coexistence came under attack (from hard-line elements in the Soviet Union, such as Molotov, and from militant parties within the international Communist movement, such as China), the more Khrushchev and his spokesmen expanded and broadened its meaning. It was argued that the avoidance of war (rather than the promotion of revolution) was *the* central goal of contemporary Soviet foreign policy. Peaceful coexistence was said to consist not merely of the absence of war, but of the establishment of economic, political, and cultural links between East and West, and it was claimed that increasingly the main focus of East-West rivalry was shifting to the arena of peaceful economic competition between the two systems.

East-West conflict was thus no longer depicted by Soviet commentators as a zero-sum game. A new element which threatened to destroy the shared playing field, the danger of nuclear catastrophe caused by miscalculation or accident, had changed the game. In the

[52] A. Beliakov, *et al.*, "God vydaiushchikhsia pobed sil mira i sotsializma," *Kommunist*, 1959, No. 18, p. 139.

face of this threat, East and West had common interests, and, with a third player in the game, one side's losses were no longer the other's gains. Both could gain or both could lose everything.

Just as it is now a commonplace in the West to speak of relations with the Soviet Union as combining elements of co-operation and conflict, so, too, did Soviet spokesmen argue as early as 1960 that class antagonism was not the sole component of East-West relations. Instead relations between capitalist and socialist countries were authoritatively defined as encompassing "both struggle and co-operation" (*"i bor'ba i sotrudnichestvo"*).[53] This was a realistic formulation which recognized the inherent duality of East-West relations. It provided the Soviet leadership with a broad ideological umbrella enabling it to follow a mix of policies ranging from energetic efforts aimed at expanding Soviet world power to more benign policies directed toward a dramatic improvement of relations with the capitalist states.

Taken together, the various ideological innovations introduced by Khrushchev constitute a doctrinal revolution of totally unprecedented proportions. Neither before nor after Khrushchev has the Soviet Union experienced such sweeping ideological change. Yet, even though Khrushchev removed some of the ideological obstacles to detente and created some of the political pre-conditions for its realization, he was still unable to bring about a durable improvement in East-West relations. His accomplishments in the area of Marxist-Leninist theory were not matched by equal success in the realm of practical politics. He was able to achieve little more than several short-lived and unstable periods of thaw in the Cold War. Tensions diminished temporarily following the Geneva summit and the Soviet agreement to neutralize Austria in 1955, again in 1959 following Khrushchev's summit meeting with President Eisenhower at Camp David, and in 1963-1964, as a consequence of the Cuban missile crisis, which caused the United States and the Soviet Union to recoil from the brink of nuclear war and conclude the Limited Test Ban

[53] Tucker, *The Soviet Political Mind*, pp. 205-209, 217-218.

Treaty, banning nuclear tests in the atmosphere, under water, and in outer space. But new crises quickly erupted, and the relaxation of tension achieved during these periods of incipient detente was rapidly dissipated.

There are two main reasons for this disparity between Khrushchev's sweeping aspirations and his limited achievements. The first relates to his political personality, and the second is linked with the ambitious nature of his foreign policy goals. Khrushchev was temperamentally unsuited to the patient pursuit of a step-by-step improvement in superpower relations. He was impulsive, mercurial and head-strong. He ignored the advice of experts, did not appreciate how his actions would be viewed by the West, and overestimated what he could achieve by bluster and threats. He lacked the patience and finesse that were needed to begin the long process of slowly defusing the antagonisms, mistrust, and conflicts that had accumulated between East and West over many decades.

An even more fundamental problem was Khrushchev's fixation on two conflicting objectives. He never sorted out his priorities and failed to realize the fundamental incompatibility between his goals. On the one hand, he genuinely wanted to achieve a major improvement in Soviet-American relations. Downplaying class differences, he saw the Soviet Union and the United States as the world's only superpowers who, by virtue of this fact, had a responsiblity to jointly manage the affairs of the world. While many in the West failed to appreciate the importance of this element in his thought, the Chinese leadership quickly grasped it. They feared that the emergence of a Soviet-American partnership to police the world would cause Moscow to neglect the interests of its socialist allies. This was a major reason why in 1960 they launched their vigorous assault against his ideological innovations. When Khrushchev refused to back down, this led to the eruption of the most serious ideological schism in the history of the international communist movement. But this was a price that Khrushchev was willing to pay. He wanted a detente and the establishment of a new, more co-operative, Soviet-American partnership.

But Khrushchev wanted more than this. Buoyed by the dramatic Soviet success in launching Sputnik, the world's first artificial space satellite, encouraged by a rapidly expanding economy whose growth rates greatly exceeded those of the United States in the late 1950s, and stimulated by his unquenchable innate optimism, he was convinced that the Soviet Union, now that it was free from the iron grip of Stalinist oppression, would surge forward and establish itself as the predominant world power. Thus, while Khrushchev wanted a negotiated end to the Cold War, he wanted this on terms highly favourable to the Soviet Union. He overplayed his hand and believed that he could push the United States and its allies out of West Berlin, replace the West as the dominant power in the newly decolonized states of Asia and Africa, and even install nuclear missiles in Cuba, right on the doorstep of the United States.

Khrushchev paid his adversaries the compliment of assuming that they were realists who would accept the inevitable and negotiate a settlement that reflected the Soviet Union's growing world power. He said as much to Adlai Stevenson, the American presidential aspirant, during a personal meeting in 1958:

> You must understand, Mr. Stevenson, that we live in an epoch when one system is giving way to another. When you established your republican system in the eighteenth century the English did not like it. Now, too, a process is taking place in which the peoples want to live under a new system of society; and it is necessary that one agree and reconcile himself with this fact. The process should take place without interference.[54]

In the end, Khrushchev's grand design came to naught. His threats and pressure alarmed his adversaries and strengthened NATO's unity and resolve. He underestimated the West's staying power, and he overestimated the economic potential of the Soviet camp. The Soviet Union lacked the strength to coerce the West into accepting a

[54] *The New York Times*, August 28, 1958, cited in Zbigniew K. Brzezinski, *The Soviet Bloc*, New York: Praeger, 1963, revised ed., p. 394.

deal on Soviet terms, while a more equitable negotiated settlement was rendered impossible by Khrushchev's pressure tactics. He achieved neither a settlement with the West nor victory over it. Khrushchev was an innovative thinker and a leader with vision, but his vision was flawed. He built the foundations for detente but could not erect a stable structure upon these foundations.

Khrushchev was ultimately a tragic figure. His colleagues eventually had enough of his impulsiveness and grandiose schemes, and they removed him from power in October 1964. He resigned in disgrace, largely unmourned in his own country and in the outside world. Yet even though his stormy leadership of the Soviet Union is best remembered as a time of recurrent international crises, he left a durable legacy by dismantling the Stalinist worldview. Khrushchev opened the door to detente even if he himself was unable to walk through it.

CONSERVATISM AND CONSOLIDATION UNDER BREZHNEV

Brezhnev ruled the Soviet Union for far longer than Lenin or Khrushchev. Yet during his eighteen years as Party leader, Soviet conceptions of East-West relations remained fixed and immobile. There was little significant forward movement. Even Gorbachev, who has been General Secretary for only three years, has had a greater impact on Soviet perspectives on international politics. Why is this the case? How is this inertia and stagnation to be explained? What impact did it have upon Soviet foreign policy?

For all their considerable differences, Stalin and Khrushchev shared an important characteristic. They both took the official foreign policy doctrine very seriously. Stalin spent his last years rigidly refusing to modify it, while Khrushchev made a determined effort to reform it. In contrast, Brezhnev largely ignored it. He did not build upon and extend the doctrinal innovations pioneered by Khrushchev, but he did not attempt to undo them either. Khrushchev's expanded conception of peaceful coexistence was not repudiated when Soviet-American relations cooled in the 1960s (though its prominence was greatly reduced), and it was not enlarged when they thawed again in the 1970s. By comparing Brezhnev's approach to doctrine with that of Khrushchev, we can gain a better sense of the distinctive characteristics of each of these leaders and of the pronounced differences between them.

In the West, Khrushchev's endorsement of peaceful coexistence was generally regarded with skepticism and suspicion. Many people

found it hard to believe that he was serious about seeking improved East-West relations. It would appear, however, that within the Soviet leadership there was concern that Khrushchev was all too serious about his quest for a Soviet-American rapprochement and was neglecting other essential Soviet interests. These concerns are reflected in the fact that there was a rapid and pronounced de-emphasis of the concept of peaceful coexistence following Khrushchev's ouster from power in October 1964.

In contrast to Khrushchev, who repeatedly ranked the achievement of peaceful coexistence as the number one goal of Soviet foreign policy, Brezhnev ranked it last.[55] Within a few weeks of taking over the leadership of the Party, Brezhnev clearly signaled that peaceful coexistence was to be accorded a reduced priority. In a speech marking the anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution, delivered on 6 November 1964, he pointedly put peaceful coexistence in last place behind such goals as "ensuring the unity and solidarity of the socialist countries," "supporting liberating revolutionary movements," and the "comprehensive development of solidarity and cooperation with the independent states of Asia, Africa and Latin America."[56] Brezhnev repeated essentially the same formulation in his speeches to the Twenty-Third Party Congress in 1966 and the Twenty-Fourth Party Congress in 1971.[57]

Following Khrushchev's ouster, his definition of peaceful coexistence as the "general line" of Soviet foreign policy was abandoned. In an unmistakable repudiation of Khrushchev's statement to the Twentieth Party Congress that "the Leninist principle of peaceful coexistence with different social systems has always been and remains the general line of our country's foreign policy,"[58] it was declared under Brezhnev:

[55] For Khrushchev's ranking of the goals of Soviet foreign policy at the Twentieth and Twenty-Second Party Congresses, see *C.D.S.P.*, VIII, No. 4, 1956, p. 12 and XIII, No. 41, 1961, p. 7. Also see *KPSS v rezoliutsiiakh*, Moscow, Politizdat, 1971, 8th ed., VII, pp. 103, 378.

[56] *C.D.S.P.*, XIV, No. 43, 1964, p. 8.

[57] *C.D.S.P.*, XVIII, No. 21, 1966, p. 34, and XXIII, No. 12, 1971, p. 4.

[58] *Ibid.*, VIII, No. 4, 1956, p. 10.

> At one time, the thesis was in circulation that the peaceful coexistence of states with different social systems "is the general line of our country's foreign policy." This was connected with a voluntaristic interpretation of the basic principles of the foreign policy of the U.S.S.R. Such an interpretation of these principles contradicted the theoretical foundation and practice of the foreign policy of a socialist state.[59]

Soviet commentators downgraded peaceful coexistence and instead stressed the fundamental importance of the principle of "proletarian internationalism."[60] This principle obligated the Soviet Union to make a determined effort to strengthen the unity of the socialist camp and to render effective support to the forces of Third World revolution.

Under Khrushchev, peaceful coexistence was protected from any and all criticism. Having been repeatedly sanctified by Khrushchev, it was immune to any public questioning, no matter how minor. But this also changed when Brezhnev came to power. The previous line was criticized and Soviet analysts were explicitly warned against overestimating the importance of the principle of peaceful coexistence.

One of Brezhnev's advisers, V. Golikov, published an article in *Kommunist* in December 1965 in which he criticized those Soviet commentators who had suggested that:

> . . . the entire essence and content of politics in the international arena is defined and exhausted by the principle of peaceful coexistence, that by now a single fight for coexistence makes it possible to abolish war and establish eternal peace on earth.[61]

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[59] V. Egorov, *Mirnoe sosushchestvovanie i revoliutsionnyi protsess*, Moscow: Mezhdunarodnye Otnosheniia, 1971, p. 160.

[60] V. Trukhanovskii, *Leninskim vneshnepoliticheskim kursom*, Moscow: Mezhdunarodnye Otnosheniia, 1971, p. 29.

[61] V. Golikov, "Vazhnyi printsip leninskoi vneshnei politiki," *Kommunist*, 1965, No. 18, pp. 98-99; Franklyn Griffiths, *Genoa plus 51: Changing Soviet Objectives in Europe*, Toronto: Canadian Institute of International Affairs, 1973, pp. 63-64.

Golikov's statement was quickly picked up and echoed by other Soviet commentators:

> Recently in the examination of the problem of peaceful coexistence in various books and pamphlets not infrequently there have been permitted inaccuracies connected with a pacifist treatment of the principle of peaceful coexistence and also with the fact that the entire policy of the U.S.S.R. in the international arena was reduced to only this one principle.[62]

A Soviet ideologist, V. Egorev, was sharply critical of the tendency of some prominent Soviet scholars in the field of international law to exaggerate and misinterpret the role of peaceful coexistence.[63] In a passage which can be read as a broad critique of Khrushchev's emphasis on improved relations with the capitalist world, he stated:

> The socialist states strive for a situation where the capitalist countries will have a positive perception of the policy of peaceful coexistence, but they never convert this policy into an end in itself. This would conflict with the principles of proletarian internationalism and would undermine the development of the international working class and National Liberation movement and would weaken the unity of the socialist countries.[64]

Khrushchev and Brezhnev both believed that the United States was entering a period of relative decline compared to the Soviet Union. They were convinced that the Soviet Union's power and international standing were on the rise and that Moscow was on the verge of making major international advances. However, whereas Khrushchev tended to see the growing economic strength of the Soviet Union as being the decisive factor promoting this development, Brezhnev relied on the Soviet Union's military might. An article written by a Soviet military officer which was published in

[62] V. I. Popov, in a review contained in *Voprosy istorii*, 1966, No. 10, p. 157. Also see *Voprosy istorii KPSS*, 1967, No. 7, pp. 28-29.

[63] Egorov, *Mirnoe sosushchestvovanie i revoliutsionnyi protsess*, pp. 161-162.

[64] *Ibid.*, p. 165.

1968 forthrightly stated: "Reliance only on the policy of peaceful coexistence and on the struggle for peace conceals a danger. The political means of preserving peace can be fully effective only if they are based on real strength, first and foremost, military power."[65]

Brezhnev's political style and temperament were very different from those of Khrushchev. He rejected Khrushchev's impulsiveness, wishful thinking, and incautious experimentation. He preferred to move cautiously and incrementally. Khrushchev's enthusiasm led to a one-sided emphasis on his panacea of the moment (such as the virgin lands, de-Stalinization or a Soviet-American rapprochement) to the detriment of other Soviet interests. Brezhnev pursued carefully framed policies which sought to avoid a one-sided thrust in any direction and attempted to address simultaneously a wide range of basic concerns. This, in turn, was coupled with a hard-headed appreciation of the ideological and political costs associated with a too-eager public embrace of peaceful coexistence with the imperialist world.

A major reason, then, for the post-1964 upgrading of the principle of proletarian internationalism and the corresponding down-playing of peaceful coexistence was the wish to reduce some of these costs (for example, to undercut Chinese and Third World charges of Soviet-American collusion and to avoid ideological demobilization at home). However, while the prominence of peaceful coexistence in Soviet pronouncements was reduced and it was given a more restrained formulation, it was definitely not abandoned. It continued to occupy a highly visible place in Soviet discussions of East-West relations. The Soviet government pushed strongly for its inclusion in the 1972 Soviet-American agreement on "Basic Principles of Relations," and an explicit endorsement of peaceful coexistence was added to the new Soviet constitution adopted in 1977.[66]

[65] N. Lomov, "On Guard Over Peace," *International Affairs*, 1968, No. 2, p. 12.

[66] The agreement on "Basic Principles of Relations" is reprinted in Roger P. Labrie, ed., *SALT Hand Book*, Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute, 1979, pp. 50-52. See article 28 of the Soviet Constitution, reprinted in Donald D. Barry and Carol Barner-Barry, *Contemporary Soviet Politics*, Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1987, 3rd ed., p. 337.

Moreover, all the other doctrinal and conceptual innovations introduced by Khrushchev were retained by the Brezhnev regime. Soviet spokesmen continued to stress the differentiation of capitalist ruling circles into moderate and hard-line forces, and they reiterated that the emergence of a sober tendency in the West made it possible to establish a stable detente and to achieve meaningful disarmament agreements. The end to capitalist encirclement, the "final" victory of socialism, and the non-inevitability of world war were all taken as given.

Aside from the role played by such factors as Brezhnev's conservative temperament, his desire not to tarnish the Soviet Union's revolutionary image, and his disinterest in ideology, Brezhnev's failure to expand Soviet conceptions of peaceful coexistence, even at the height of detente in 1972-1974, can also be viewed as an implicit tribute to Khrushchev's success in refashioning the Marxist-Leninist worldview. Khrushchev left his successors with a new set of propositions and principles which enabled them to conceptualize in their own minds, and to legitimize in the eyes of their followers, a broad range of co-operative policies toward the capitalist world, ranging from frequent summit meetings and expanded trade to the regulation of regional conflict and arms control. Khrushchev's innovations provided Brezhnev with an ideological carte blanche to pursue his policy of expanded detente. Brezhnev was far more concerned than his predecessor with the potential political costs of ideological innovation, so he chose to avoid a further revision of the Stalinist legacy. In his pursuit of detente, Brezhnev preferred to proceed with concrete measures to expand political and economic co-operation with the West but to avoid calling undue attention to this process by making sweeping ideological pronouncements.

There was, however, an unanticipated cost associated with this strategy. The absence of doctrinal change meant that the Soviet leadership did not stand back and rethink traditional approaches to East-West relations. The adjustments that were made in Soviet policy did not go beyond tactical fine tuning (such as expanding trade with the West and allowing 250,000 Jews to emigrate). Thus,

Brezhnev unthinkingly fell into the trap of repeating Khrushchev's fatal error. He, too, came to believe that he could achieve a significant improvement in East-West relations and a major increase in the Soviet Union's global power at one and the same time. Like Khrushchev, he assumed that "realists" in US policy-making circles would pragmatically adapt to the changing "correlation of forces" and calmly accept a decline in the American position in the world because the only other alternative — a violent and ultimately futile attempt to resist the tide of history — promised even worse consequences for the United States.

Brezhnev valued the SALT I agreement and the 1972 Basic Principles Agreement precisely because he saw them as embodying his dual policy. To him they signified improved relations with the United States based upon American acceptance of the Soviet Union's vastly expanded world power.[67] This was not the US view, and as the divergence in Soviet and American perspectives subsequently became clearer both in Moscow and in Washington, detente inevitably unraveled. Soviet foreign policy paid a high price for Brezhnev's unwillingness to rethink traditional Soviet attitudes and doctrines.

By 1977, Soviet policy-makers realized that East-West relations were definitely on a downward slide and detente was threatened. They wanted to salvage their policy of detente but lacked a strategy for doing so. The Soviet leadership was unwilling to exercise self-restraint in Asia and Africa, since they felt that the Soviet Union, as one of the world's two superpowers, was fully entitled to a greater role in the Third World. They felt that their on-going military buildup was the foundation of Soviet global power and were unwilling to halt it. They ruled out any change in their basic policies and opted instead for a strategy of verbal reassurance.

[67] Harry Gelman, "The Rise and Fall of Detente," in Arnold L. Horelick, ed., *US-Soviet Relations*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986, pp. 55-85; Coit D. Blacker, "The Kremlin and Detente: Soviet Conceptions, Hopes, and Expectations," in Alexander L. George, ed., *Managing US-Soviet Rivalry*, Boulder: Westview Press, 1983, pp. 119-137.

Somewhat belatedly, the Soviet leadership recognized that growing Western alarm over Moscow's military buildup posed a serious threat to detente. They attempted to alleviate Western anxieties by denying the existence of a Soviet threat and by disclaiming any interest in military superiority. These statements did little to alter Western perceptions of Soviet policies. Nonetheless, they are still of interest because they were a forerunner of the far more effective public relations campaign launched by Gorbachev.

Brezhnev initiated the policy of verbal reassurance with a major policy address given in January 1977 in the Soviet city of Tula. In this speech, which was later christened the "Tula line" by skeptical Western analysts, he explicitly denied that the Soviet Union sought military superiority over the West. He stated:

> Of course, comrades, we are improving our defenses. It cannot be otherwise. We have never neglected the security of our country and the security of our allies, and we shall never neglect it. But the allegations that the Soviet Union is going beyond what is sufficient for defense, that it is striving for superiority in armaments with the aim of delivering a "first strike," are absurd and utterly unfounded.[68]

He offered this characterization of Soviet policy:

> Our approach to these questions can be formulated thusly: The Soviet Union's defense potential should be sufficient to deter anyone from disturbing our peaceful life. Not a course aimed at superiority in armaments but a course aimed at their reduction, at lessening nuclear confrontation — that is our policy.[69]

Similarly, in his speech later that year marking the sixtieth anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution, he stated:

> The Soviet Union is effectively seeing to its own defense, but it is not striving for and will not strive for military superiority over the other

[68] *C.D.S.P.*, XXIX, No. 3, 1977, p. 3.
[69] *Ibid.*

> side. We do not want to upset the approximate equilibrium of military strength that now exists, say, between East and West in Central Europe or between the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.[70]

It is instructive to compare Brezhnev's speech to the Twenty-Sixth Party Congress in 1981 with his address to the Twenty-Fifth Congress in February 1976, since this comparison illustrates some of the changes that were introduced by the "Tula line." In 1976, Brezhnev was still concerned about allegations from ultra-militant elements within the Third World and the Communist movement who charged that the Soviet Union was betraying the cause of international revolution when it sought closer relations with the West. In refutation of these accusations, Brezhnev declared:

> Detente does not in the slightest abolish, and it cannot abolish or alter, the laws of class struggle. . . . We make no secret of the fact that we see detente as a path leading to the creation of more favorable conditions for peaceful socialist and communist construction.[71]

In defending the Soviet Union's revolutionary credentials, Brezhnev only intensified Western anxieties about Soviet policy. This passage, which was repeatedly cited by those in the West who mistrusted Soviet intentions, was not repeated in his 1981 speech.

Even as early as February 1976, Brezhnev attempted to refute Western allegations that Soviet policies posed a danger to the security of the United States and Western Europe. He specifically denied that there was a "Soviet threat," and he stated that these allegations were "a monstrous lie from beginning to end."[72] However, it is noteworthy, that though he recognized the necessity of calming and reassuring the West, nowhere in the speech did he resort to the approach initiated in 1977 of explicitly disclaiming a Soviet interest in military superiority.

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[70] *Ibid.*, XXIX, No. 44, 1977, p. 11.
[71] *Ibid.*, XXVIII, No. 8, 1976, p. 14.
[72] *Ibid.*, p. 10.

In contrast, in his 1981 speech to the Party Congress, he specifically declared that the Soviet Union was committed to maintaining the existing "military-strategic equilibrium," and he pointedly rejected the idea that the Soviet Union believed in the possiblity of victory through nuclear war.[73] Traditionally, Soviet analysts have not been comfortable with notions of equilibrium. The official doctrine is predicated on the idea of movement and change. It proclaims that history's onward march cannot be stopped, that the "correlation of forces" is tipping in favor of the socialist camp, and that socialism will eventually prove victorious over capitalism on a worldwide scale. Thus, the new emphasis on "equilibrium" represented, at least potentially, a significant shift in tone and emphasis. However, Brezhnev did not spell out the implications of this concept, and he did not relate it to established doctrine. He simply declared:

> The military-strategic equilibrium that exists between the U.S.S.R. and the U.S. and between the Warsaw Treaty and NATO objectively serves to preserve peace on our planet. We have not sought, and do not now seek, military superiority over the other side. This is not our policy.[74]

For good measure, he added: "To try to prevail over the other side in the arms race or to count on victory in a nuclear war is dangerous madness."[75]

These statements represented a noticeable shift in the Soviet Union's verbal posture and anticipated some of Gorbachev's later formulations. But it was a case of too little, too late. Western observers were disinclined to take these changes seriously.[76] The verbal adjustments were still relatively minor, and Brezhnev had let too many years pass without any significant alteration in basic Soviet doctrine pertaining to East-West relations.

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[73] *Ibid.*, XXXIII, No. 8, 1981, p. 11.

[74] *Ibid.*

[75] *Ibid.*

[76] See the arguments advanced in Benjamin S. Lambeth, "Has Soviet Nuclear Strategy Changed?," Rand Paper P-7181, The Rand Corporation, December 1985.

The failure to rethink Soviet doctrine thus had two major consequences. It contributed to the Brezhnev regime's inertia and lack of political imagination, and in this way was one of the factors that led to the repetition of many of Khrushchev's mistakes. In addition, this doctrinal orthodoxy reinforced the perception in the West that fundamental changes had still not occurred in the Kremlin's thinking. Brezhnev did little to alter the widespread view that the West continued to face a determined adversary which might vary its tactics but still adhered to the time-honored strategy of relentless struggle against capitalism.

Brezhnev's close association with the Soviet military buildup and with the use of Soviet and Cuban military forces in the Third World diminished his credibility in the West as a spokesman for detente. His ill health during his last years in office and his conservative temperament precluded any dramatic moves to improve the Soviet image. The adjustments in the Soviet Union's pronouncements on nuclear war had little effect on Western perceptions of the Soviet Union. By 1981, when Brezhnev made his speech to the Twenty-Sixth Party Congress, his declining health caused him to be viewed as a lame duck, and Western policy-makers were awaiting the dawning of the post-Brezhnev era.

GORBACHEV'S "NEW THINKING": A CHANGE IN STYLE OR SUBSTANCE?

The first two individuals who succeeded Brezhnev as General Secretary, Yuri Andropov and Konstantin Chernenko, ruled for too short a time and were too ill to have a noticeable effect upon Soviet perspectives on East-West relations. However, in March 1985, a younger and more energetic individual, Mikhail Gorbachev, became General Secretary. His dynamism has been in sharp contrast to the slow-paced conservatism of his immediate predecessors, and his actions have provoked much speculation and controversy in the West about his objectives and the extent to which he will be able to realize them. A comprehensive examination of Gorbachev's attempt to reform the Soviet economy and society is beyond the scope of this study. However, it is necessary to examine the meaning and significance of his call for "new thinking" (*"novoe myshlenie"*) as it applies to Soviet conceptions of East-West relations.

Gorbachev has been General Secretary for three years. During this period he has not altered any of the traditional tenets of Soviet doctrine pertaining to international politics. However, he has interjected a number of new themes into Soviet discussions of East-West relations, and he has adopted a new tone of moderation and reasonableness. The crucial question is whether these changes constitute the beginning of a genuine effort to rethink traditional Soviet attitudes and policy or simply represent cosmetic alterations aimed at improving Soviet propaganda efforts.

Broadly speaking, Western analysts are divided into two schools

of thought on this question. For want of better labels, they might be termed the "skeptics" and the "optimists."[77] The summary judgment of the skeptics is that no genuine, fundamental changes have occurred in either the conceptualization or the execution of Soviet foreign policy.[78] They see the more dovish statements emanating from Moscow as being little more than a skilled public relations exercise. In their view, Gorbachev and his close advisers (such as Aleksandr Yakovlev, Anatoli Dobrynin, and Evgeni Primakov) are more sophisticated and more worldly than their predecessors, and hence are more cognizant of the damage that the Soviet Union has inflicted upon itself through needlessly harsh rhetoric. They want to undo this damage and capitalize upon the West's deep yearning for a more peaceful world by packaging Soviet policies in more alluring garb. They have learned from Madison Avenue that there is a ready market for the same old product so long as it is periodically touted as "new" and "improved." For the skeptics, the changes thus far are purely matters of style not substance.

The "optimists," on the other hand, see the beginnings of a more significant trend.[79] They believe that the Soviet leadership is serious in calling for "new thinking" about international politics, and they are hopeful that a genuine process of re-examining and questioning past Soviet assumptions has begun. New foreign policy personnel have been put in place, some new policies have been launched, and

[77] The varying interpretations that emerged at a scholarly conference on the Twenty-Seventh Party Congress are summarized in Abraham Becker, *et al.*, *The 27th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union: A Report from the Airlie House Conference*, Santa Monica: Rand, 1986. A more popular examination of the divisions among Western Sovietologists is contained in "Will the Cold War Fade Away?," *Time*, 27 July 1987, pp. 28-34.

[78] For skeptical discussions of Gorbachev's foreign policy, see Harry Gelman, "Gorbachev's Dilemmas and His Conflicting Foreign-Policy Goals," *Orbis*, XXX, No. 2, 1986, pp. 231-247; Thane Gustafson, "Will Soviet Foreign Policy Change Under Gorbachev?," *The Washington Quarterly*, IX, No. 4, 1986, pp. 153-157; Walter Laqueur, "The World as Seen by Gorbachev," *ibid.*, pp. 147-151; Dimitri K. Simes, "Gorbachev: A New Foreign Policy?," *Foreign Affairs*, LXV, No. 3, 1987, pp. 477-500; Philip D. Stewart, "Gorbachev and Obstacles Toward Detente," *Political Science Quarterly*, CI, No. 1, 1986, pp. 1-22; Viktor Yasmann, "'The New Political Thinking' and the 'Civilized' Class Struggle," *Radio Liberty Research Bulletin*, RL 292/87, 29 July 1987, pp. 1-6.

the prospects for a productive East-West dialogue on security issues have been enhanced by the new perspectives championed by Gorbachev.

Clearly, it is more difficult to assess Gorbachev's contribution to Soviet foreign policy than it is to analyze Stalin's, Khrushchev's or Brezhnev's. A number of years have passed since these earlier Soviet leaders departed from the world stage, while the drama initiated by Gorbachev's accession to power is still in its first act. Gorbachev is relatively new to the job, his full political programme has not yet been revealed, and we do not know how much of his political agenda he will be able to accomplish. Nonetheless, given the controversies that exist among foreign observers and the need to establish a sound foundation for Western policy, it is important to make an interim assessment of Gorbachev's approach based upon the evidence that is presently available to us.

Our analysis attempts to do this through a careful examination of his call for "new thinking" in international politics. We will proceed as follows: First, we will look at what authoritative Soviet spokesmen have actually been saying about East-West relations. We will set out the record of Soviet pronouncements both at the Twenty-Seventh Party Congress and in subsequent commentaries. Following this, we will attempt to arrive at a sound and balanced appraisal of Gorbachev's approach through an examination of the arguments of those who are highly skeptical about the Soviet Union's new posture and the counter-arguments of those who are more optimistic.

[79] More positive assessments of Gorbachev's foreign policy are contained in Matthew Evangelista, "The New Soviet Approach to Security," *World Policy Journal*, III, No. 4, 1986, pp. 561-599; Charles Glickham, "New Directions for Soviet Foreign Policy," *Radio Liberty Research Bulletin*, Supplement 2/86, 6 September 1986; Franklyn Griffiths, "'New Thinking' in the Kremlin," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, XLIII, No. 3, 1987, pp. 20-24; F. Stephen Larrabee and Allen Lynch, "Gorbachev: The Road to Reykjavik," *Foreign Policy*, No. 65, Winter 1986-87, pp. 3-28; Joseph S. Nye, Jr., *et al.*, *How Should America Respond to Gorbachev's Challenge?: A Report of the Task Force on Soviet New Thinking*, New York: Institute for East-West Security Studies, 1987; Robert C. Tucker, "Gorbachev and the Fight for Soviet Reform," *World Policy Journal*, IV, No. 2, 1987, pp. 179-206; Martin Walker, "Gorbachev Speech a Major Change in Soviet Ideology," *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, 1 March 1987, p. 8.

The Twenty-Seventh Party Congress opened on 25 February 1986, thirty years to the day since Khrushchev's historic denunciation of Stalin at the Twentieth Congress and just under a year since Gorbachev had been selected as General Secretary. In his lengthy report to the Congress, Gorbachev sounded a number of themes that had either not previously been articulated at a Party Congress or which had only been alluded to in a far less prominent and compelling fashion.

First and foremost, Gorbachev articulated what might be viewed as a new conception of the Soviet Union's security interests, one that constituted an implicit critique of Brezhnev's approach to foreign policy. Under Brezhnev, there was an exaggerated preoccupation with the military dimension of Soviet power. The Soviet leadership believed that its prolonged buildup of military forces during the 1960s and 1970s was the critical factor that ensured the Soviet Union's superpower status, produced a much-desired "sobering" of US policymakers, and was bringing about a continuing shift in the international "correlation of forces" in favor of the Soviet Union. As far as military hardware was concerned, the general assumption in Soviet policy-making circles was the more, the better. The Soviet Union was in pursuit of "total security" through the piling up of military strength.[80]

It appears that some of Gorbachev's comments at the Twenty-Seventh Party Congress may have been directed against precisely this kind of thinking. He stated:

> The nature of current weaponry leaves no country with any hope of safeguarding itself solely with military and technical means, for example, by building up a defence, even the most powerful. To ensure security is becoming more and more a political task, and it can only be resolved by political means.[81]

[80] The Soviet Union's quest for total security is discussed in Seweryn Bialer, "Lessons of History: Soviet-American Relations in the Postwar Era," in Arnold Horelick, ed., *US-Soviet Relations*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986, pp. 94-95.

[81] Mikhail Gorbachev, "Politicheskii doklad tsentral'nogo komiteta KPSS XXVII s'ezdu," *Kommunist*, 1986, No. 4, p. 54.

As part of this new approach, he called for broad international efforts to create a "comprehensive system of international security" which would encompass not just the military dimension but political, economic, and humanitarian aspects as well.[82]

In addition to de-emphasizing the military component of security, Gorbachev also called for a less self-centred approach to East-West relations. Here, too, his remarks could be read as a condemnation of the counter-productive nature of much of Brezhnev's diplomacy and of the military buildup which ultimately damaged Soviet security interests, by intensifying Western fears of "the Soviet threat" and by provoking the extensive American military effort of the early 1980s. He stated:

> Security, if we are talking about relations between the U.S.S.R. and the US, can only be mutual, and, if we take international relations as a whole, it can only be universal. The highest wisdom is not to be concerned exclusively for oneself, especially when this is to the detriment of the other side. It is necessary that everyone feel equally secure, since the fears and anxieties of the nuclear age give rise to unpredictability in policies and concrete actions.[83]

In this connection, he seemed to acknowledge the virtues of self-restraint and to recognize that Soviet security may ultimately be diminished if other nations feel threatened by Soviet actions and feel compelled to respond to them. He stated: "In the military sphere, we intend to continue to act in such a way that no one will have any reason for fear — even imaginary — for his security."[84] In defining his approach toward foreign policy, he noted: "What is needed is special precision in evaluating one's possibilities, restraint, and the loftiest responsiblity in making decisions."[85]

Although earlier Soviet spokesmen had on occasion spoken of the

[82] *Ibid.*, pp. 62-64.
[83] *Ibid.*, p. 54.
[84] *Ibid.*, p. 56.
[85] *Ibid.*

world's growing "interdependence" and the emergence of "global problems" which threatened all states regardless of their social system, these themes received increased prominence in Gorbachev's speech to the Party Congress. He warned that global problems imperilled "the very foundations of the existence of civilization."[86] He called for a new approach and new thinking:

> Global problems that affect all mankind cannot be solved through the efforts of a single state or group of states. What is needed here is co-operation on a worldwide scale — the close, constructive interaction of the majority of countries. . . . As you see, comrades, there are many problems — large-scale and complex problems. But one cannot fail to see that, on the whole, the way they have been comprehended lags behind the scope and depth of current tasks.[87]

Although some portions of Gorbachev's speech were imbued with orthodox stereotypes denouncing the misanthropic nature of imperialism, other sections adopted a quite different tone. On the whole, Gorbachev's speech was characterized by a deliberate effort to de-emphasize the role of class cleavages in international politics and to transcend the traditional *kto-kogo* (who will defeat whom) orientation of past Soviet commentary on East-West relations. Instead of portraying imperialism as the sole cause of war and the only threat to Soviet security, Gorbachev several times pointed to modern technology, with its tendency to acquire a life and momentum of its own, as the key problem. He warned that in the nuclear age, the "time factor" is becoming very important.[88] "[W]hen nuclear weapons are at the ready, time and space lose their customary outlines for civilization and mankind becomes the prisoner of chance."[89] He appealed for new perspectives and new efforts to confront the danger threatening mankind:

> The American President once said that if our planet were threatened by a landing of beings from another planet, the U.S.S.R. and the US

[86] *Ibid.*, p. 17.
[87] *Ibid.*, p. 18.
[88] *Ibid.*, p. 54.
[89] *Ibid.*, p. 19.

> would quickly find a common language. But isn't a nuclear catastrophe a more real danger than a landing by unknown beings from another planet? Isn't there a great ecological threat? Don't all countries have a common interest in finding a sensible and fair approach to the problems of the developing states and peoples?[90]

Gorbachev's speech was also pervaded with a heightened sense of urgency about the consequences of nuclear war. His treatment of this matter contrasted quite noticeably with the comparative complacency that characterized Brezhnev's speeches to previous Party Congresses. In discussing the potential consequences of nuclear war, Gorbachev made his most concrete revision of past orthodoxy.

The assumption that the general direction of history is predetermined constitutes one of the cornerstones of Marxism-Leninism. The development of economic forces and the operation of the dialectic supposedly guarantee that socialism will inevitably supplant capitalism throughout the world. Just as feudalism was inexorably eliminated by the spread of capitalism, so too, according to official doctrine, is capitalism destined to be superseded by socialism.

The emergence of nuclear weapons, with their potential to destroy all civilized life on the planet, clearly poses a challenge to this deterministic view of history. If a nuclear holocaust can annihilate the socialist states along with the capitalist nations of the world, does this not invalidate the premise of history's inexorable march toward a socialist world? For this reason, authoritative Soviet spokesmen have been hesitant to admit that the socialist system might well vanish together with capitalism in the event of a nuclear war.

Back in March 1954, in an incautious moment, the head of the Soviet government, Georgi Malenkov observed that war between imperialism and socialism "given modern methods of warfare, means the destruction of world civilization."[91] His rivals within the

[90] *Ibid.*, p. 18.

[91] *Pravda*, 13 March 1954, cited in Joseph L. Nogee and Robert H. Donaldson, *Soviet Foreign Policy Since World War II*, New York: Pergamon, 1984, 2nd ed., p. 110.

Soviet leadership quickly seized upon this statement as a fundamental ideological error which reflected insufficient confidence in the invincibility of the socialist cause. The next month Malenkov backed down and conceded that only capitalism would perish in the event of a nuclear war.[92] Marshal Kliment Voroshilov reflected the consensus among his colleagues within the Presidium (as the Politburo was then called) when he declared in March 1955: "We cannot be intimidated by fables that in the event of a new world war civilization would perish."[93]

Henceforth the official position on nuclear war had two main elements. It was acknowledged that a nuclear war would have catastrophic consequences and would result in the death of many millions of people, but it was also asserted that in the event of a nuclear war, socialism would still survive. The new Party Programme, which was adopted under Khrushchev in 1961, clearly articulated this dual formulation. It stated that a nuclear war "can bring unprecedented destruction to entire countries and wipe out entire nations."[94] But it also implied that in the event of a new world war, socialism would survive and only imperialism would perish: "Should the imperialist aggressors nevertheless venture to start a new world war, the peoples will no longer tolerate a system which drags them into devastating wars. They will sweep imperialism away and bury it."[95]

When a revised version of the 1961 Party Programme was adopted at the Twenty-Seventh Party Congress, this last passage was dropped, and it was tacitly acknowledged that the socialist system was at no less risk than capitalism. In language similar to the previously rejected formulation of Malenkov, the newly adopted Party Programme stated that nuclear war "could destroy world

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[92] *Ibid.*, p. 111.

[93] *Pravda*, 27 March 1955, cited in *ibid.*, p. 111.

[94] Jan F. Triska, ed., *Soviet Communism: Programs and Rules*, San Francisco: Chandler, 1962, p. 64.

[95] *Ibid.*, p. 65.

civilization," and in the event of such a war "there would be neither victors nor vanquished."[96]

Gorbachev's language at the Congress was equally strong. He warned that there has been a "qualitative leap in the means of destruction" which "for the first time in history, has 'endowed' man with the physical capability to destroy all life on earth."[97] He did not envisage any difference in the fate of socialism and capitalism in the event of a nuclear conflict: "Nuclear weapons bear the threat of a hurricane capable of wiping humankind from the face of the earth."[98] Given the overriding threat posed by the nuclear danger, as well as other global problems, he called for new joint efforts to save humanity: "The need to accomplish the more urgent tasks common to all mankind should impel them to interaction and should awaken in mankind hitherto unseen powers of self-preservation."[99]

Gorbachev's speech to the Congress did not explicitly criticize Brezhnev's foreign policy, but he did call for new approaches. He stated:

> The situation has come to a turning point not only in internal but also in *external* affairs. The changes in current world affairs are so deep and significant that they require a reassessment and a comprehensive analysis of all factors. The situation created by the nuclear confrontation calls for new approaches, methods, and forms of mutual relations between the different social systems, states and regions.[100]

In a later passage he also noted: "Continuity in foreign policy has nothing in common with the simple repetition of what has been done, especially in approaches to accumulated problems."[101]

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[96] "Programma Kommunisticheskoi Partii Sovetskogo Soiuza," *Kommunist*, 1986, No. 4, p. 111.
[97] *Kommunist*, 1986, No. 4, p. 10.
[98] *Ibid.*, p. 53.
[99] *Ibid.*, p. 19.
[100] *Ibid.*, p. 6.
[101] *Ibid.*, p. 56.

The General Secretary's Report to a Party Congress is crafted so as to proclaim the official line on domestic and foreign policy, and this is exactly what Gorbachev's speech did. It provided the marching orders for the legions of Soviet public affairs commentators, Party ideologists and international relations specialists who have dutifully quoted and paraphrased these passages innumerable times in the period since the Congress. Over and over again, they have faithfully echoed his words that security in the nuclear age can be achieved only by political means, that security can only be mutual, since a nation will not truly be secure until its adversaries also feel safe, that the world is becoming increasingly interdependent, that global problems, which threaten all nations, can be solved only through international co-operation, and that the ultimate global problem is the threat of the extinction of human civilization in a nuclear war. Articles have appeared in all of the most authorative publications, such as the ideological journal *Kommunist*, the Party newspaper *Pravda*, and the leading foreign affairs journals *Mirovaia ekonomika i mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia (World Economy and International Relations)* and *SShA (USA)* with such titles as: "New Thinking — A Demand of the Nuclear Century," "A New Philosophy of Foreign Policy," "New Political Thinking — Imperative of the Present Day," and "New Realities and New Thinking."[102]

It is now an everyday occurrence to find Soviet spokesmen calling for "new thinking" in international politics. The key question, however, is not the frequency or even the eloquence of these statements, but their operational significance for the day-to-day conduct of Soviet foreign policy. This brings us to the disagreement, alluded to at the beginning of this chapter, between those Western analysts who are highly skeptical about the significance of these statements and those who are more optimistic and hopeful.

Despite the barrage of articles and speeches proclaiming the "new thinking," the skeptics remain unconvinced. There are four main

[102] *Kommunist*, 1986, No. 10, pp. 113-124; *Pravda*, 10 July 1987, p. 4; *Mirovaia ekonomika i mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia*, 1986, No. 10, pp. 16-25; *SShA* 1987, No. 2, pp. 3-15.

reasons for their caution and wariness in assessing Gorbachev's attempt to create a new look for Soviet foreign policy.

First, the skeptics argue that there is not much that is really new in the verbal formulations adopted by Gorbachev. He has added a few new phrases in his discussion of the interrelation of Soviet and American security, but all of his other pronouncements can be viewed as just a restatement of past themes. As noted in the previous chapter, Brezhnev made a significant effort to reassure the West about Soviet military plans during the late 1970s and early 1980s. He denied that the Soviet Union sought military superiority and dismissed the notion that nuclear war was winnable. Similarly, Brezhnev and other Soviet commentators spoke of the world's growing interdependence due to the impact of the worldwide "scientific-technological revolution," and they also called for international co-operation to deal with emerging global problems.[103]

Second, the skeptics maintain that the reason there is so little that is new in Gorbachev's pronouncements is that his goal is not to alter the way in which East-West relations are conceptualized in the Soviet Union but rather to create the illusion of change so as to advance Soviet objectives abroad. According to this view, Gorbachev is trying to capitalize upon the West's short historical memory, its overestimation of the role of the General Secretary's personality in Soviet politics, and its desire to believe that the new, "young," "modern" leader in the Kremlin will be able to transform the troubled battleground of East-West relations. The skeptics believe that in attempting to achieve a "quick fix" for the Soviet Union's battered image, Gorbachev has an immediate tactical goal in his sights. He is trying to stop the Strategic Defense Initiative (S.D.I.) and weaken the West's determination to continue with the high level of spending that is necessary to counter Soviet military might. The pretended embrace of "new thinking" is simply a shrewdly conceived means to this end.

[103] For an analysis of Soviet discussions of interdependence and global problems, see Erik P. Hoffmann and Robbin F. Laird, *"The Scientific-Technological Revolution" and Soviet Foreign Policy*, New York: Pergamon, 1982.

The skeptics acknowledge that the men around Gorbachev are more sophisticated than their predecessors and more knowledgeable about the West, but in their view this means primarily that Gorbachev's advisers have a greater understanding of public relations and an enhanced ability to play upon the hopes and wishes of Western publics. They have learned from past Soviet mistakes, when the Soviet Union was its own worst enemy due, in part, to ill-conceived and clumsily executed propaganda efforts (such as the escalation of tensions in 1983-1984 in a vain attempt to block the installation of US intermediate-range missiles in Europe).

Rather than attacking S.D.I. frontally, Soviet policy-makers have decided upon a more indirect approach. Instead of just denouncing S.D.I. — though this is done as well — Soviet spokesmen are attempting to take the high road by proclaiming that all nations, the Soviet Union and the United States alike, should recognize that the true path to enhanced security can be found only through negotiation and self-restraint. Soviet pronouncements proclaim that no nation, even the most powerful, can achieve security through a unilateral buildup of its defensive or offensive forces. This, it is claimed, is an inescapable reality of the nuclear age which the Soviet leadership fully recognizes. The United States is called upon to acknowledge this situation so that a new era of international co-operation and harmony can begin.

In the eyes of the skeptics, this is a potent appeal which may well achieve the Soviet objective of hobbling Western military efforts while imposing only the most minimal constraints upon Moscow. The Soviet Union still remains a highly authoritarian political system, one in which the actual military budget is not even published much less defended from public criticism, whereas Western governments must continually protect their military expenditures from the assaults of vocal and powerful constituencies that are eager to put this money to other uses. The obvious tactical advantages that accrue to the Soviet Union from adopting an appearance of moderation thus constitutes a second major reason for Western skepticism about Soviet championship of "new thinking" in international politics.

The third reason is the artificial, premeditated, and carefully coordinated nature of the Soviet campaign on behalf of this "new thinking." Gorbachev's speech to the Twenty-Seventh Party Congress triggered an avalanche of similar statements in the Soviet press. The problem is, that despite the scores of articles that have been published dealing with this theme, Soviet commentators have done little more than quote or paraphrase Gorbachev's remarks. They sound like so many broken records, stuck repeating the same few permitted phrases over and over again without adding anything of substance to them or providing any concrete examples of how the "new thinking" might apply to past, present or future Soviet foreign policy.

The contrast between this carefully stage-managed approach to foreign policy and the Soviet press' more open treatment of domestic issues is especially striking and disheartening. In the last two years, we have seen the emergence of controversy and real debate within the Soviet press on such sensitive issues as the radical overhauling of the economy, the relaxation of censorship in the arts, and the legacy of Stalin. Reformers and conservatives have articulated conflicting positions and clashed repeatedly. Above all, people are beginning to find their own voice. They are learning how to speak publicly in their own words with a freshness and individuality that has not been seen for decades in the Soviet Union. However, when it comes to the public discussion of East-West relations, time has stood still. There is virtually no controversy, there is little individuality, and the present set of self-serving slogans are simply mechanically reiterated in much the same way that a different group of slogans were parroted in previous years.[104]

[104] There are some faint stirrings of controversy, but the disagreements over foreign policy are still far more muted than the debates over domestic issues. See the analyses contained in Elizabeth Teague, "Polemics Over 'Euromissiles' in the Soviet Press," *Radio Liberty Research Bulletin*, RL 113/87, 20 March 1987, pp. 1-3; Viktor Yasmann, "Telebridges with the West," *ibid.*, RL 129/87, 8 April 1987, pp. 1-5; Eugene Rumer, "Soviet Writers Clash Over Morality of Nuclear Deterrence," *ibid.*, RL 299/87, 13 July 1987, pp. 1-4; Thomas Nichols, "'Intellectual Pacifists' Criticized by Military Officer," *ibid.*, RL 308/87, 28 July 1987, pp. 1-4; Elizabeth Teague, "Stalin Blamed for Hitler's Rise to Power," *ibid.*, RL 354/87, 1 September 1987, pp. 1-2.

In this connection, it is especially noteworthy there has been virtually no criticism of past Soviet foreign policy either by Gorbachev or by the scores of loyal publicists who call for new thinking in international politics. Here, too, the situation is in striking contrast to the way that domestic policy has been treated. Brezhnev's mismanagement of the economy has been denounced repeatedly in strong and explicit terms, but not a single one of his foreign policy moves has been repudiated.

It is not just the actual conduct of Soviet foreign policy that is exempt from criticism. Soviet spokesmen do not cite any specific Soviet beliefs or doctrines about international politics that are in need of rethinking. Even more telling, they do not even unambiguously endorse the general proposition that there are, in fact, some Soviet views that need to be re-examined. Through the use of carefully ambiguous formulations, it is platitudinously stated that all nations need fresh thinking in tune with the realities of the nuclear age, but it is never acknowledged that the Soviet Union might have ever made any mistakes or that it needs to update any of its perspectives on international politics.

At first hearing, Soviet calls for new thinking sound like a refreshing change from the stale rhetoric of the past. But upon closer scrutiny, they seem to be saying little more than that the peace-loving foreign policy of the Soviet Union has long since adapted to the requirements of the nuclear age and that it is only the continued existence of outmoded thinking in the West that prevents a fundamental breakthrough in East-West relations. Thus, in the eyes of the skeptics, the appeal for new thinking constitutes not a call for new Soviet approaches, but a way of increasing the pressure on the West to alter its policies.

For example, in discussing the Soviet moratorium on nuclear testing, Gorbachev stated:

> It is now clear as clear can be that the old notions of war as a means of attaining political objectives have become outdated. In the nuclear

> age, these obsolete tenets feed a policy that may result in a worldwide conflagration. . . . The new thinking required by the present-day world is incompatible with the notion of it as someone's private domain, with "do others a big favor" with one's tutelage and precepts as to how to behave and what path to choose — socialist, capitalist or something else.[105]

On another occasion, he declared:

> One of the main lessons of Reykjavik is that new political thinking corresponding to the realities of the nuclear age is an indispensible condition for coming out of the critical situation in which mankind finds itself at the end of the 20th century. Profound changes must take place in the political thinking of mankind.[106]

The skeptics argue that statements like these cost the Soviet Union nothing. They are a cost-free means of fostering the politically beneficial impression of open-mindedness and moderation while still not conceding that the Soviet Union might have ever erred in the past and contributed, even to the slightest degree, to cold war tensions and the arms race.

A fourth basis for skepticism is the fact that there has been relatively little change in the actual conduct of Soviet foreign policy under Gorbachev. Sounding the familiar refrain that it is deeds not words that really count, Western analysts have pointed to the lack of significant movement in Soviet policy toward Afghanistan, China, Japan, and the Middle East. Gorbachev has adopted a new tone and called for an improvement in Soviet relations with a number of countries (for example in discussing Sino-Soviet relations in his Vladivostok speech of 28 July 1986), but he has not followed up with much in the way of concrete action.

The initial years after Stalin's death provide a useful comparative bench mark for evaluating Gorbachev's foreign policy. In March

[105] *Pravda*, 19 August 1986, p. 1.

[106] "Vremia trebuet novogo myshleniia," *Kommunist*, 1986, No. 16, p. 13.

1988, Gorbachev completed his third year as General Secretary. In the first three years of the post-Stalin period, from March 1953 to March 1956, the new Soviet leadership launched the following major initiatives: the Korean War was ended; the Soviet Union agreed to the neutralization of Austria and the withdrawal of its troops from that country; Moscow relinquished control of the Finnish naval base at Porkkala; diplomatic relations were established with the Federal Republic of Germany, re-established with Israel and Greece, and significantly improved with Yugoslavia; previous territorial claims against Turkey were renounced; the Geneva Conference on Indochina produced a negotiated truce; Khrushchev travelled to China on a mission of reconciliation; and the first postwar summit conference was arranged.[107] In comparison, Gorbachev's record of accomplishment is exceedingly thin. Sino-Soviet relations are improving at a snail's pace, more than 100,000 Soviet troops remain in Afghanistan, Soviet-Japanese relations are still frosty, diplomatic relations with Israel have not been restored, and even though a treaty has been concluded for the removal of intermediate-range forces from Europe, the United States and the Soviet Union remain far apart on the vastly more important issues of strategic missiles and space defences.

For all of these reasons, the skeptics see Gorbachev's call for new thinking in international politics as much ado about nothing. For example, Helmut Sonnenfeldt dismisses Moscow's "new thinking" as merely "old-fashioned thinking with a jazzed up vocabulary. It's old poison in new bottles."[108] The optimists, however, have a very different perspective and advance a number of arguments to support a more hopeful assessment.

While agreeing with many of the concerns and reservations expressed by the skeptics, they see grounds for a more optimistic assessment of what Gorbachev has achieved thus far and what he is likely to accomplish in the near future.

[107] Philip E. Mosely, *The Kremlin and World Politics*, New York: Vintage Books, 1960, pp. 363-381, 454.

[108] Quoted in *Time*, 27 July 1987, p. 32.

The optimists readily admit that Gorbachev's speech to the Twenty-Seventh Party Congress did not mark a fundamental revision of Soviet ideology and that it was less sweeping than Khrushchev's pronouncements at the Twentieth Congress, which demolished the Stalin myth, repudiated the inevitability of war, and put in place the foundations for a broadly expanded conception of peaceful coexistence. But they see Gorbachev's caution as a natural consequence of the fact that at the time of the Twenty-Seventh Congress he had not yet consolidated his power and was far more vulnerable than Khrushchev was at the time of the Twentieth Party Congress in 1956.

Although Malenkov and Molotov remained within the Presidium in 1956, they had both suffered sharp defeats the year before. Malenkov was forced to give up his position as head of the Soviet Government in February 1955, and Molotov's foreign policy views were rejected by the Central Committee in July 1955. Gorbachev's position within the Politburo during the latter part of 1985 and early 1986, at the time when the laborious process of drafting his report was under way, was far more tenuous, and hence his need for caution was greater. Since the Congress, Gorbachev has strengthened his personal power, but during this period his primary concern has been to formulate a programme for the fundamental restructuring of the Soviet economy, and he has not invested the intellectual energy and political capital necessary to move beyond the formulations adopted at the Congress.[109]

It is true that Gorbachev did not break new ground at the Congress when he referred to interdependence, global problems, and the need for greater international co-operation. Brezhnev had conveyed a similar message at the previous Congress.[110] However, those of a

[109] This was strikingly evident in the long-awaited speech that Gorbachev gave on 2 November 1987 to mark the seventieth anniversary of the Revolution. Although this speech contained a long section on East-West relations, it simply reiterated the themes that had been enunciated at the Twenty-Seventh Party Congress a year and one half earlier, and it added little that was new. *Pravda*, 3 November 1987.

[110] *C.D.S.P.*, XXXIII, No. 8, 1981, p. 12.

more optimistic frame of mind argue that Gorbachev's subsequent statements on these themes have been much more frequent and forceful than Brezhnev's. He speaks with what appears to be much greater conviction. For example, in a speech delivered in Prague on 10 April 1987, Gorbachev stated:

> The interdependence of the present-day world is such that all peoples are similar to climbers roped together on the mountainside; they either can climb together to the summit or fall together into the abyss. To prevent a fall from happening, political leaders must rise above narrowly conceived interests and recognize the entire dramatic nature of the present situation.[111]

Gorbachev's emphasis on mutual security and the interconnection between Soviet and American security does break new ground and is, potentially, of greater significance. He has stressed this theme on numerous occasions. For example, after the 1985 Geneva summit, he expressed his "profound conviction that less security for the United States of America compared to the Soviet Union would not be in our interest, since it could lead to mistrust and engender instability."[112] Similarly, in an interview with the French Communist newspaper *L'Humanité*, which was reprinted in *Pravda* on 8 February 1986, he said that "there cannot be security for the USSR without security for the U.S.A."[113] Statements such as these have caused Robert Legvold, the director of the Harriman Institute for Soviet studies at Columbia University, to remark: "This is a historic juncture. Gorbachev is the first Soviet leader to link national security to mutual security, to argue that the USSR cannot achieve security at the expense of its main rival."[114]

The optimists are mindful of the tactical and manipulative elements in Gorbachev's peace campaign, and they recognize that he

[111] *Pravda*, 11 April 1987, p. 2. Also see the speech that Gorbachev delivered on Soviet television, as published in *Pravda*, 19 August 1986, p. 1.

[112] *Pravda*, 22 November 1985, p. 2.

[113] *Pravda*, 8 February 1986, p. 2.

[114] Quoted in *Time*, 27 July 1987, p. 28.

is attempting to improve the Soviet Union's severely tarnished image and to undermine support for Star Wars. But they believe this is only one part of the picture. While it is true that Gorbachev is attempting to construct a more effective political platform for himself and for the Soviet Union, it is argued that in all countries political platforms are framed with multiple constituencies in mind. Gorbachev's emphasis on the political — as opposed to purely military — aspects of security does more than enhance his foreign image. It also enables him to counter some of the more militant perspectives that exist within Soviet policy-making circles. The anxiety that resulted from the Soviet Union's long unilateral moratorium on nuclear testing, the discomfort over the Soviet decision to sign a treaty on intermediate-range nuclear forces which obligates it to give up far more warheads than the US, and the fears about the intrusive on-site verification resulting from the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty and other arms control measures constitute potent sentiments with which Gorbachev must contend. The new emphasis on the political dimensions of security legitimizes a more innovative approach, and for this reason it should be welcomed by the West.[115]

Despite the need for care in assessing what is still a very fluid situation, there are some solid grounds for cautious optimism. In his relatively short period of rule, Gorbachev has certainly not succeeded in transforming the Soviet Union. But he has been successful in attacking old routines, in shaking up Soviet society, in creating ferment and in stimulating a questioning of established verities that has not been seen in the Soviet Union since the 1920s. Stalin's legacy is under attack, some of the "unpersons" of Soviet history (such as

[115] In the period since the meeting of the Warsaw Pact in May 1987, Soviet spokesmen have been cautiously referring to the concept of "sufficiency" as one of the basic principles of Soviet military policy. Since sufficiency suggests much more modest military requirements than superiority or parity, this could, at some point in the future, become a significant new element in Soviet foreign policy doctrine. However, thus far, the notion of sufficiency seems to be little more than a politically beneficial slogan, which has yet to be defined, rather than an operational concept shaping Soviet policy. (For two recent instances where Gorbachev made a fleeting reference to sufficiency, see his article in *Pravda* on 17 September 1987 and his speech of 2 November 1987 commemorating the seventieth anniversary of the Revolution.)

Khrushchev, Bukharin, and even Trotsky) are beginning to emerge from the shadows, long-banned films have been released, social ills such as drug abuse and prostitution have been discussed in the press, the much-vaunted health system has been sharply criticized, and long-sacred economic practices (such as guaranteed employment, heavily subsidized housing, and centrally controlled prices) have been questioned. Autonomous social forces are beginning to stir, especially among the various nationalities of the Soviet Union. Opposition to Gorbachev's restructuring has begun to surface and, no less remarkable, to be discussed in the Soviet press. As Robert C. Tucker, one of the deans of American Sovietology, has written: "History is on the move again in Soviet Russia."[116]

Gorbachev has sanctified and stimulated this process. At the Party Congress, he again and again hammered away at Soviet conservatism and called for fresh approaches. Gorbachev warned against "any attempt to turn the theory by which we are guided into a set of ossified constructs and recipes. . ."[117] He called upon Party officials to develop the "ability to transcend habitual but already outdated notions."[118] He characterized the most recent period of Soviet history as a time when "the practical activities of Party and state agencies lagged behind the demands of the times and of life itself. Problems in the country's development grew faster than they were solved."[119] In his view, "a peculiar mentality began to gain the upper hand: How can things be improved without changing anything?"[120]

In his speech to the Central Committee on 27 January 1987, Gorbachev again returned to this theme. He decried past practices that produced a climate in which "lively discussion and creative thought disappeared from theory and the social sciences, while authoritarian evaluations and judgments became indisputable truths

[116] Tucker, "Gorbachev and the Fight for Soviet Reform," p. 179.
[117] *Kommunist*, 1986, No. 4, p. 7.
[118] *Ibid.*
[119] *Ibid.*, p. 6.
[120] *Ibid.*

subject only to commentary."[121] His close associate on the Politburo, Aleksandr Yakovlev, has warned against viewing "science as a set of infallible 'truths' and propositions," and has declared that the "ideological-theoretical underpinning of restructuring presupposes the scrapping of dogmatism. . ."[122]

Gorbachev's most urgent objective is to foster a new climate within the Soviet Union, one that is supportive of far-reaching economic change. But if domestic policy is in the process of being questioned and rethought, is foreign policy likely to remain immune from this process for long? Brezhnev's occasional homilies on the dangers of a nuclear catastrophe were embedded in speeches which were pervaded by traditional thinking and complacent self-congratulation. Gorbachev's statements on the dangers posed by a nuclear holocaust have differed from Brezhnev's, not just because they have been stated more forcefully and with a greater sense of urgency, but because they have come against the backdrop of a genuine assault on unimaginative and out-dated thinking. Gorbachev's remarks on foreign policy have been made at a time of new dynamism in Soviet society and politics. The call for "new thinking" in international politics clearly does not constitute a doctrinal revolution, but neither can it be dismissed as a carefully executed hoax designed solely to mislead the West.

The skeptics are clearly correct in pointing out that for all the talk about *glasnost'*, there has not been as yet much openness in the Soviet Union when it comes to discussing how foreign policy was conducted in the pre-Gorbachev period and in indicating how it might be reformed. However, while a veil of silence has been drawn across the public discussion of Soviet foreign policy, this does not mean that it has escaped a critical re-examination within the private confines of the Party apparatus and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. On the contrary, the available evidence suggests that Gorbachev and his associates are highly dissatisfied with the the past conduct of Soviet

[121] *Kommunist*, 1987, No. 3, p. 7.
[122] *C.D.S.P.*, XXXIX, No. 15, 1987, p. 1.

foreign policy. During the first two years of his leadership, Gorbachev replaced all the leading personnel responsible for foreign policy. This included the Foreign Minister, the head of the International Department of the Central Committee, the head of the Central Committee department responsible for relations with Communist countries, the chief foreign policy adviser attached to the General Secretary's personal staff, and the Minister of Foreign Trade. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs was extensively reorganized, several new departments were created, and numerous new appointments were made at the level of Deputy and First Deputy Minister.[123]

We know from two brief notices that appeared in *Pravda* that a highly unusual conference "On the Tasks of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs" took place on 23-24 May 1986. This conference was addressed by Gorbachev and the new Foreign Minister, Eduard Shevardnadze, among others, and its participants included three members of the Secretariat with foreign policy responsibilities (Aleksandr Yakovlev, Anatoli Dobrynin and Vadim Medvedev), high ranking Central Committee officials, various Ministers and Deputy Ministers, and Soviet Ambassadors. Some indication of the general tenor of what was said behind closed doors can be gleaned from *Pravda*'s report that Soviet diplomacy "was discussed in a critical and exacting Party fashion" and that "measures were outlined to improve its entire performance in implementing the strategic policy of the 27th C.P.S.U. Congress."[124] Similarly, a terse report of a follow-up meeting that was held in the Foreign Ministry a year later stated: "The situation whereby stagnation phenomena affected the approaches [of the Foreign Ministry] to a number of major problems and important trends has been substantially rectified."[125]

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[123] These personnel changes are discussed in Timothy J. Colton, *The Dilemma of Reform in the Soviet Union*, New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1986, revised ed., pp. 178-182, and Archie Brown, "Change in the Soviet Union," *Foreign Affairs*, LXIV, No. 5, 1986, pp. 1049-1053.

[124] *Pravda*, 24 May 1986, p. 1; *Pravda*, 25 May 1986, p. 2.

[125] *Izvestiia*, 6 May 1987, p. 4.

The continued absence of any public debate about Soviet foreign policy should not come as a surprise, and unwarranted conclusions should not be drawn from this situation. Given traditional sensitivities and long-standing Bolshevik practice, Soviet officials find it far more difficult to relax controls in this area than they do in the realms of social policy, the arts or historiography. The formulation and evaluation of Soviet foreign policy has always been carefully shielded from public scrutiny. Even at the height of de-Stalinization in 1956-1957 and 1961-1962, when Stalin's domestic repression was strongly attacked, virtually nothing critical of his foreign policy was allowed to appear in print. The leadership has based its actions upon the firmly held belief that any open confession of past error in the conduct of Soviet foreign policy would play into the hands of the imperialist enemy and undermine Soviet claims that the West is totally responsible for the Cold War and the arms race. Gorbachev has yet to break with this long-standing pattern of behavior. He has bluntly criticized Soviet domestic failings and sharply attacked Brezhnev's unwillingness to deal with them, but Soviet spokesmen are able to allude to the inadequacies of Brezhnev's foreign policy only in vague and opaque terms.[126]

About the only thing that has changed thus far is that, in at least one instance, a well-placed Soviet spokesman, Aleksandr Bovin, was able to criticize this lack of openness on foreign policy issues. Bovin made his remarks in the course of an interview in Budapest, and evidently said much the same in a speech to the Sixth Congress of the USSR Journalists' Union which met in Moscow in March 1987. Asked by his Hungarian interviewer about various rumours concerning what he had actually said at the Congress, Bovin replied:

[126] It should be noted that while Soviet foreign policy toward the West has generally been spared critical commentary, long-standing Soviet perspectives on the Third World are being questioned. See the remarkable article by Boris Asoian that appeared in *Literaturnaia gazeta*, 7 October 1987, p. 14. Also see, G. Mirskii, "K voprosu o vybore puti i orientatsii razvivaiushchikhsia stran," *Mirovaia ekonomika i mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia*, 1987, No. 5, pp. 70-81. Evgeni Primakov, the director of the Institute of World Economy and International Relations, has gone as far as is currently allowed in *implying* dissatisfaction with past Soviet policy toward the West in "Novaia filosofiia vneshnei politiki," *Pravda*, 10 July 1987, p. 4.

> I said that on the question of openness — and this is also the party's declared view — there could be no area exempt from analysis and criticism. I expounded that this is a splendid goal that is beginning to take but we have to face the facts. There are still areas in which it is difficult to objectively analyze certain decisions. For me as a foreign affairs journalist the activities of the Foreign and Defense Ministries are such areas. They have a direct influence on foreign policy, but as a journalist I can by no means criticize the decisions of these ministries.[127]

We should not misinterpret the absence of public criticism of Soviet foreign policy. It is, to be sure, a sign of the leadership's continued secretiveness on sensitive matters of public policy. But it is not an indication that the members of the Politburo are satisfied with past or present performance in this area.

Changes in Soviet foreign policy have been slow in coming, but we should not be surprised at this situation nor discouraged by it. Time and again, Gorbachev has declared: "Our foreign policy today stems directly from our domestic policy to a larger extent than ever before," and there is no reason to doubt him on this point.[128] For the moment, his major goal in foreign policy is that of damage limitation. He is proceeding cautiously and prudently so as not to do anything that would undercut his very ambitious programme for the transformation of the Soviet economy.

Gorbachev's actions indicate that he would like to see a significant improvement in the effectiveness of Soviet foreign policy. During Brezhnev's last years, Soviet relations with the United States, Western Europe, China, and Japan either stagnated or deteriorated. The Soviet Union remains a relatively minor player in the politics of the Middle East, and it has become mired in the Afghanistan quagmire. Gorbachev would like to change all this. But he also sees foreign policy as a dangerous mine field. Costly initiatives might be

[127] Foreign Broadcast Information Service, *Daily Report: Soviet Union*, 31 March 1987, p. R15.
[128] *Ibid.*, 1 April 1987, p. G4.

rebuffed, gains can be quickly lost, and overtures to one side may jeopardize relations with other nations (for example, in the Arab-Israeli conflict or the Iran-Iraq war). Thus, Gorbachev has moved with extreme caution.

Gorbachev has chosen to inch his way along with circumspect half steps (for example, in his policy toward Afghanistan, the Middle East, and China). While the Soviet position in the world is more precarious than he would like, for the short and medium term it is acceptable to him. It would appear that he believes that it is better to move slowly rather than risk serious set-backs which would increase his own political vulnerability and detract from his focus on the radical transformation of the economy.

There is, however, one acute foreign threat to his domestic programme, which cannot be ignored — the possiblity of a marked acceleration of the arms race. The greater the American effort on Star Wars, the more resources the Soviet Union will have to expend on the military to prevent a sharp deterioration in its position. For this reason, arms control is one area where Soviet foreign policy has been unusually active, imaginative, and flexible.

When President Reagan's zero option for intermediate-range missiles was announced in 1981, it was viewed by both supporters and critics as a shrewd public relations ploy. No one expected the Soviets to accept this proposal, since the zero option would require them to eliminate their substantial arsenal of warheads and to accept a balance on intermediate-range missiles that was far less advantageous than the situation that existed in the mid-1970s prior to the introduction of their SS-20s. Yet Gorbachev was willing to accept the zero option. When the West responded that it was now concerned about an imbalance in shorter-range missiles, Gorbachev offered to remove these as well.

Under Gorbachev's leadership, the Soviet Union has accepted on-site verification of unprecedented proportions as part of the INF Treaty signed on 8 December 1987, and it adhered to a unilateral

moratorium on nuclear testing from August 1985 to February 1987, despite some apparent unhappiness in the Soviet military about the cessation of Soviet nuclear tests at a time when the United States was continuing its own testing programme.[129] This adroit diplomacy provides an indication of the kinds of bold and innovative moves that Gorbachev is capable of when he perceives a need for decisive action. We should not rule out a similar activation of Soviet foreign policy in other areas at some time in the future. However, for now Gorbachev's attention is on urgent domestic matters. The main goal of Soviet foreign policy is damage limitation combined, where possible, with cautious incremental progress.

Nonetheless, despite Gorbachev's preoccupation with internal economic reform, there is a close interrelation between domestic and foreign policy. Thus, Western optimists hope that even a partial and limited liberalization within the Soviet Union will have a highly beneficial effect upon East-West relations. This might occur through two main channels: by lessening Soviet insecurities and by diminishing the internal repression that the West finds so objectionable.

The intrinsic difficulty of dealing with the Soviet Union, which springs from the profound differences between their society and ours and from the Kremlin's aspirations to expand its global power, is further complicated by Soviet political culture. Western experts, whether doves or hawks, have repeatedly remarked upon the deeply ingrained Soviet sense of insecurity, vulnerability, and inferiority which has led to an excessive reliance upon military might, the subjugation of neighboring states, as well as to mistrust of foreigners, obsessive secrecy and glacial rigidity. These traits have their roots in centuries of Russian history and have been reinforced by more than two generations of Communist rule. Recurrent invasions from abroad, Tsarist autocracy, the conspiratorial origins of the Bolshevik Party, and long years of Stalinist oppression have all left a deep imprint on Soviet attitudes and perceptions. Soviet political culture

[129] The Soviet military's uneasiness over the moratorium is discussed in Griffiths, "'New Thinking' in the Kremlin," pp. 22-23.

will not change overnight. Yet to a truly remarkable degree, Gorbachev has already brought a new climate to the Soviet Union. *Glasnost'* represents not just more publicity and openness about some of the negative features of Soviet society, but a significant lessening of past defensiveness and feelings of inferiority.

Gorbachev's handling of the Sakharov case provides a good example of his bold and self-confident style. It also illustrates how the pursuit of internal reform and external detente may reinforce each other. Improved East-West relations may be an incentive for — as well as a consequence of — domestic relaxation.

Once Gorbachev decided to seek a major improvement in East-West relations, Andrei Sakharov's continued confinement to Gorky became a serious liability. Yet it was not easy for the Soviet leadership to reverse itself and allow him to return to Moscow as a free man. This would amount to a confession of past error and would expose the Soviet regime to Sakharov's continued criticism. Thus it appeared that the Soviet leadership was in a no-win situation. What was to be done?

Gorbachev's handling of this conundrum was creative and innovative. It would appear that he squarely confronted the problem and decided: (1) that the foreign policy costs of Sakharov's banishment were too high; (2) that the Soviet leadership should have the self-confidence to endure Sakharov's criticism of its policies; and (3) that a skillful policy could convert a costly liability into a major asset. Instead of trying to muzzle Sakharov, why not let Sakharov's criticism of the Soviet regime serve as a dramatic symbol to the outside world of the "new" Soviet regime and its innovative leader? What better way to enhance the Soviet image abroad than by allowing Sakharov to appear on Western television screens criticizing Moscow's policies? Would this not undercut Western attempts to depict the Soviet system as repressive and undemocratic? The release of Sakharov would serve an important domestic function as well. It would help Gorbachev in his courting of the Soviet intelligentsia. The support of writers, poets, economists, scientists,

and such others, is vital if he is to succeed in bringing about a psychological revolution within the Soviet Union and overcoming people's cynicism, apathy, and alienation. As well, it would send a strong message to recalcitrant bureaucrats demonstrating that the leadership is indeed serious in calling upon them to break with past habits and work in a new way.

Once the decision to release Saknarov was taken, Gorbachev moved to capitalize on it. Rather than simply let Sakharov return quietly and unheralded to Moscow, Gorbachev personally called him in Gorky — on a phone that had to be installed just for this purpose — with the news of his release, thereby displaying an excellent sense of public relations and reaping much personal praise abroad. Far from trying to isolate Sakharov and intimidate him into silence through K.G.B. harassment, Soviet authorities went so far as to make a television studio available to him so that he could be interviewed by Western television networks. To defuse potential criticism from abroad — and to capitalize on Sakharov's opposition to S.D.I. — he was even invited to address the star-studded international peace conference that was held in Moscow in February 1987.

Gorbachev's adroit handling of the Sakharov case provides a good example of the "new thinking" that he has been advocating. It reflects a willingness to jettison old positions and the ability to move boldly to convert liabilities into assets for Soviet foreign policy.

It is also indicative of a major change in how the Soviet leadership approaches its goal of promoting a favorable foreign image of its country. Previous Soviet leaders were preoccupied with the worry that the Soviet Union might appear weak and vulnerable in the eyes of its foreign adversaries. Gorbachev, on the other hand, has come to recognize that one of the benefits of *glasnost'* is that it deflates overblown conceptions of Soviet military capabilities and counteracts exaggerated estimates of the unity and single-mindedness of Soviet society. As Nikolai Shishlin, an official in the Information Department of the Central Committee, candidly observed during an interview with a Hungarian reporter:

> It is true that a view, a behavior existed according to which nothing bad could be written about the Soviet Union. The world could not learn of any mistake because an unfavorable picture would then evolve about the Soviet Union in the eyes of the world public. Now, on the other hand, we name our mistakes, our problems, and it surprised many that through this a much more nuanced and favorable picture of the Soviet Union has developed. This proved to us that frankness and openness is worth much more than the most perfect, but falsely colored picture.[130]

Under Brezhnev, it was denied that the Soviet Union suffered such afflictions of capitalist society as unemployment and drug abuse. Under Gorbachev, the existence of unemployment has been acknowledged, and a CBS film crew was even allowed to film a Soviet drug bust for broadcast over American television! In his memoirs, Henry Kissinger describes how he found it difficult to engage Gromyko or his associates in a broad discussion of Soviet and American conceptions of international security. They were too insecure and defensive to enter into such an enterprise.[131] Now, with Gorbachev at the helm, the Soviets are calling for talks aimed at discussing the contrasting nature of the military doctrines of NATO and the Warsaw Treaty Organization.[132] All this suggests not just new skills at public relations but a greater self-confidence, less defensiveness, a waning of the previous sense of inferiority, and a better understanding of what kinds of past Soviet behavior have stood in the way of efforts to reduce international tension and regulate the arms race.

Writing in 1981, in the twilight of the Brezhnev era, George Kennan penned a vivid picture of the mental universe of the Soviet leadership, and in so doing he provided a useful bench mark which enables us to gauge more accurately the magnitude of the changes currently under way within the Soviet Union. Kennan wrote:

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[130] Foreign Broadcast Information Service, *Daily Report: Soviet Union*, 8 May 1987, p. R19.

[131] Henry Kissinger, *White House Years*, Boston: Little, Brown, 1979, p. 1210.

[132] See the proposal for discussions on military doctrine contained in the document adopted by the Warsaw Treaty Organization in May 1987, "On the Military Doctrine of the Warsaw Treaty Member States," *Pravda*, 30 May 1987, p. 2.

> I see these men as the prisoners of many circumstances: prisoners of their own past and their country's past; prisoners of the antiquated ideology to which their extreme sense of orthodoxy binds them; prisoners of the rigid system of power that has given them their authority; but prisoners, too, of certain ingrained peculiarities of the Russian statesmanship of earlier ages — the congenital sense of insecurity, the lack of inner self-confidence, the distrust of the foreigner and the foreigner's world, the passion for secrecy, the neurotic fear of penetration by other powers into areas close to their borders, and a persistent tendency, resulting from all these other factors, to overdo the creation of military strength.[133]

Again and again, people in the West have assumed or hoped that the Soviet regime was about to liberalize. This happened during the New Economic Policy of the 1920s, during the Grand Alliance of World War II, and in the period following Stalin's death. These disappointments should serve as a vivid reminder of the need to avoid wishful thinking and of the value of healthy skepticism. Nonetheless, I would argue that recent developments within the Soviet Union do provide a sound basis for cautious optimism about the possible emergence of new approaches toward East-West relations within the Kremlin. In my view, Gorbachev's foreign policy pronouncements cannot be explained away as being nothing more than improved public relations. There is an historic process of change and ferment at work in the Soviet Union. A far-reaching and fundamental transformation of Soviet perspectives on East-West relations is certainly not inevitable, but neither is it impossible.

[133] George F. Kennan, *The Nuclear Delusion*, New York: Pantheon, 1983, p. 153.

CONCLUSION

Several significant conclusions emerge from this study. These findings suggest that there is a sound basis for cautious optimism about the prospects for a further evolution of Soviet perspectives on East-West relations. However, they also reinforce the lesson that the West should not fall prey to wishful thinking, either by overestimating what Gorbachev has accomplished thus far or by assuming that further ideological change is assured.

On the one hand, we have seen: (1) Lenin did not have a well-developed theory of East-West relations. As a result, even though Soviet leaders continue to proclaim their fidelity to Leninism, they are not prevented from searching for new ways to come to terms with the West, and they are not precluded from experimenting with new approaches to ensure mutual security in the nuclear age. Leninism does not constitute a doctrinal strait jacket which must be discarded by the Kremlin before meaningful change can take place in Soviet attitudes and policies. It can be broadly and creatively reinterpreted so as to legitimize whatever policies the Soviet leadership chooses to follow. (2) Far-reaching doctrinal change is definitely possible. This was graphically demonstrated by Khrushchev during the period 1956-1960. (3) Although the Soviet propaganda line often shifts with dizzying rapidity, the core concepts of Soviet doctrine have been stable for long periods of time. In the past half century, since the orthodox Stalinist worldview coalesced in the 1930s, the latter part of the 1950s stand out as the one and only period of unambiguous and sustained ideological innovation. Consequently, if Gorbachev

does succeed in bringing about a second period of fundamental doctrinal change, this will be a development of major importance for the conduct of Soviet foreign policy and the future of East-West relations.

All this encourages a degree of optimism. However, this needs to be counter-balanced by two further observations. First, as the previous chapter indicates, the innovations that have been introduced thus far by Gorbachev are relatively limited in their scope and significance. Although they suggest that a genuine process of rethinking the direction of Soviet foreign policy may be underway in the Kremlin, it is not yet certain that Gorbachev will succeed in having a fundamental and lasting impact on Soviet perspectives on East-West relations. Much remains to be done, and he may not stay the course. At some point in the future, Gorbachev may find himself under pressure from more conservative members of the Politburo to abandon his reformist policies, or he might even suffer the same fate as Khrushchev and be ousted from office.

Second, the Khrushchev period — which was characterized by recurring international crises and a schizophrenic desire to achieve simultaneously improved relations with the West and victory over it — demonstrates that even major doctrinal change does not provide a guarantee of improved relations. The discarding of key tenets of the Stalinist perspective removed one of the most formidable barriers to the easing of international tension. As such, it was a necessary condition for better relations with the West. But it did not, in and of itself, constitute a sufficient condition to ensure this. Many other factors also shaped the conduct of Soviet foreign policy during the post-Stalin period, not the least of which was Khrushchev's overestimation of Soviet power and his determination to tip the "correlation of forces" in the Soviet Union's favour. Similarly, in the years ahead, much will depend not just on how Gorbachev perceives and conceptualizes East-West relations, but on whether the insights of the "new thinking" are translated into more moderate policies. It remains to be seen whether the Soviet leadership will succeed in summoning up the will to resist seductive opportunities for short-

term gains that are bound to arise in various parts of the world and instead makes a genuine effort to re-orient Soviet resources and energies inward for the restructuring of Soviet society.

It is often argued that "actions speak louder than words." There is much truth in this maxim. *Perestroika* must involve a restructuring not just of Soviet attitudes, but of priorities and policies as well. However, it also must be remembered that for an outside observer, a nation's actions may be no less ambiguous than its rhetoric. For example, if the Soviet Union were to withdraw all its troops from Afghanistan, some Western observers would enthusiastically hail this as clear proof that a fundamental transformation of Soviet foreign policy was under way, while others would no doubt argue that this action was simply an opportunistic move motivated by short-term tactical considerations.

Even though the attempt to decipher Soviet doctrine is fraught with its own difficulties and ambiguities, it provides a useful body of evidence which can supplement and complement the insights derived from other sources. The study of Soviet doctrine can thus be drawn upon to increase the soundness and reliability of our interpretation of Soviet foreign policy. It is to be hoped that this study has contributed to the reader's understanding of the evolution of Soviet foreign policy by providing an insight into the perspectives and doctrines that Gorbachev inherited, the limited adjustments that he has made thus far, and the more substantial alterations that may yet be forthcoming.

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From Lenin to Gorbachev

Mikhail Gorbachev has made the call for "new thinking" the central theme in his pronouncements on international politics. But what is the significance of this development? Are we witnessing the beginning of a historic reappraisal of the central tenets of Marxism-Leninism or just a skillful public relations campaign? Since we cannot evaluate the "new thinking" without a sound understanding of the old, this study attempts to answer these questions through an analysis of the development of Marxist-Leninist doctrine pertaining to East-West relations as it has evolved from Lenin's day to the present.

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